Now, Short Notice Question. Shri Venkaiah Naidu. ...*(Interruptions)*... Short Notice Question.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

Downgrading of 1001 Variety of Paddy

1. SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India has decided to downgrade the 1001 variety of paddy;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that 1001 variety of paddy was treated as super fine category till this year;

(d) whether Government have received representations from MPs, farmers organisation of Andhra Pradesh, in this regard; and

(e) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir. MTU 1001 variety of paddy grown in Andhra Pradesh was classified in May, 1995 as 'Fine' variety. Following regrouping of earlier three groups to two groups *viz.* "Grade 'A'" and "Common" since Kharif Marketing Season 1997-98, this variety now falls under "Grade 'A'" category.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. However, representations have been received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and some Members of Parliament seeking revision of the maximum limit of admixture of lower class in the specifications of rice from 10% to 14%. Keeping in view the representations, it has been decided to accept rice in Andhra Pradesh with admixture of lower class upto 13% till to 31st March, 2000.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are happy that the Government have reviewed the decision of the Food Corporation of India and then decided to restore it, but surprisingly, the answer says that it will be allowed only up to March, 2000. Sir, this is a variety which is grown in at least six districts of Andhra Pradesh and this is classified as a super fine variety, and a lot of export is also taking place. Because of this downgradation of reducing the admixture from 14 per cent to 10 per cent, the price has come down and the farmers are put to hardships. I am happy that the Government have now reviewed it. But will they create it a permanent feature? Is there any problem in doing it? If there is a problem regarding the quality itself, will the Government think in terms of supplying a fine variety of seeds so that this problem of admixture doesn't arise?

श्री शांता कुमार: सभापति जी, जहां तक इस वैरायटी का सवाल है, इसको डाऊन ग्रेड नहीं किया है। चावल की तीन वैरायटी थीं— फाइन, सुपर फाइन और कॉमन, उनको अब दो में कर दिया है और यह जो 1001 ग्रेड है, अब यह ग्रेड ए में आ गया है। पहली बात तो यह है कि डाऊन ग्रेड हमने नहीं किया है। सभापति जी, हमारे सामने समस्या यह है कि वर्ष 1997-98 में स्पेसिफिकेशन रिलेक्स की गई थी, जैसा कई बार मौसम की खराबी के कारण या कई बार राजनैतिक मौसम की खराबी के कारण होता है और आज स्थिति यह है कि रिलेक्स्ड स्पेसिफिकेशन का 27 लाख टन चावल हमारे पास ऐसा पड़ा है, जिसको लेने के लिए प्रदेश तैयार नहीं है। इतना ही नहीं, सभापति जी, हमारे पास इस समय 3 लाख 80 हजार टन चावल ऐसा है, जो नॉन-इस्युएबल है, इसी कारण से कि जब लिया गया था स्पेसिफिकेशन रिलेक्स की गई थी या और कुछ कारण हुए। तो यह जो 3 लाख 80 हजार टन चावल हमारे पास पड़ा है, जो इस्यू नहीं किया जा सकता, उसको रखने का खर्चा 60 करोड़ रुपए साल का है। इसलिए सरकार ने अब यह निर्णय लिया है कि स्पेसिफिकेशन रिलेक्स नहीं किए जाएंगे, गुणवत्ता के बारे में, क्वालिटी के बारे में कोई समझौता नहीं किया जाएगा। यह निर्णय सख्ती के साथ पालन करने की कोशिश की है।

सभापति जी, जहां तक आंध्र प्रदेश की इस वैरायटी का सवाल है, हमारे पास इस प्रकार की बातें आईं कि यह विशेष वैरायटी है, पहले से सूचना नहीं मिली, किसान परेशानी में है और इसलिए केवल इस वर्ष के लिए, जो 10 प्रतिशत हमने कर दिया था रिलेक्स एडमिनिस्टर्ड में, इसको इस वर्ष के लिए 13 प्रतिशत कर दिया है। सभापति जी, हमने इस वैरायटी के बारे में विशेष टेस्ट करवाए हैं और अब मैं माननीय सदस्यों को बताना चाहता हूं कि हमने जो टेस्ट करवाए उसके मुताबिक भी 10 प्रतिशत से अधिक कोई जस्टिफिकेशन नहीं है। लेकिन, चूंकि

पहले 14 प्रतिशत था, समय पर नहीं बताया गया था और बहुत से माननीय सदस्यों ने भी इस बारे में कहा, तो इस आधार पर केवल इस वर्ष के लिए 13 प्रतिशत किया है। अगले वर्ष हम रिलेक्स करने की स्थिति में नहीं है।

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government have taken some positive action. I have already said that we are happy about it, but, at the same time, if it was allowed 14 per cent previously, that was also done only after conducting specific tests.

Now the Department is coming with an answer saying that we have got the test conducted and it is not allowed up to 13 per cent because there are no takers. I am not able to understand this and even appreciate this response. Sir, everywhere there is a demand for this variety of rice. Even this Ministry of the Government of India is giving rice to Orissa. They can as well supply this rice to the Orissa cyclone-affected people also. There are 3,80,000 tonnes of rice available. We have got a public distribution system in Andhra Pradesh also. In the State's local terminology, it is considered by the people as a super fine variety. I don't know what the view of the concerned Department is, and how suddenly it is changed. Will the Minister discuss this issue, in detail, with the Government of Andhra Pradesh and also the farmers' representatives? One thing should be appreciated. As it was not told earlier, the farmers have gone for that and the Government is coming to their rescue. But, at the same time, abandoning the variety as such, or downgrading it, in whatever way you classify it, is not in the interest of the farming community.

श्री शांता कुमार: सभापति जी, मैंने पहले ही कहा कि इस वैराइटी को डाउन ग्रेड नहीं किया है। मैं एक बात और सदन को बता देना चाहता हूं कि गेहूं में, बीट में पहले चार वैराइटी थीं, फिर दो की और अब एक कर दी है और इसी तरह चावल में तीन से दो की है। सभापति जी, जितनी ज्यादा वैराइटी, जितनी ज्यादा फारमेलिटीज़, जितनी ज्यादा स्पेसिफिकेशन होती हैं, उतना ज्यादा भ्रष्टाचार होता है। स्पेसिफिकेशन इस ढंग से होती हैं— चावल की लम्बाई कितनी है, चौड़ाई कितनी है, उसका रेशो निकालों। अब उसमें जितनी फारमेलिटीज़ होती है, उतनी गड़बड़ उतना भ्रष्टचार होता है। अब तो मंत्रालय यहां तक सोच रहा है कि चावल की तीन से दो वैराइटी की बजाए, दो से भी एक वैराइटी कॉमन पर आया जाय, कॉमन की पैदावार भी ज्यादा होती है, ताकि उसमें कम से कम भ्रष्टाचार हो, कम से कम गड़बड़ हो। आपने जैसे पूछा है, 1994-95 में दस प्रतिशत थी विद क्वालिटी कट 20 परसैंट, फिर 10 परसैंट एडमिस्टर्ड था,

फिर उसके बाद 14 हुई, अब धीरे-धीरे कम करते-करते उसको 10 परसैंट कर दिया गया है। सभापति महोदय, प्रश्न यह कि जब पैडी में 10 परसैंट ऐडमिस्टर्ड अलाऊ है तो राइस में 14 परसैंट कैसे होगा क्योंकि पैडी से राइस जब बनता है तो 70 परसैंट रह जाता है, तो 10 परसैंट यदि पैडी में है तो चावल बनने पर कम होने की संभावना हो सकती है बढ़ने की संभावना नहीं हो सकती। यदि इतना किया जाएगा तो एडल्ट्रेशन की अधिक संभावना हो जाएगी। टैस्ट भी हमने सारे करवा दिए हैं, टैस्ट्स की रिपोर्ट आ गई हैं, मैं माननीय सदस्य को टैस्ट्स की सारी रिपोर्ट भेजूंगा। आंध्र के मित्रों से बातचीत भी हो गई है, आन्ध्र के मुख्य मंत्री से भी मेरी बातचीत हो गई है, मैंने सारी बात उनको बता दी है और मेरी बात से वे भी कन्विंस हैं, लेकिन उन्होंने कहा कि इस साल की विशेष परिस्थिति है और उस परिस्थिति के कारण हमने 13 परसैंट कर दिया, अगले साल नहीं कर सकेंगे क्योंकि क्वालिटी को स्ट्रिक्टली मेंटेन करने का निर्णय सरकार ने कर लिया है।

SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Sir, our Chief Minister had written about this 1001 variety, umpteen number of times. The specification has been relaxed up to 13 per cent. It is good. This variety is an 'A' Grade variety and it is a widespread variety in Andhra Pradesh, especially, the first receipt. This relaxation is up to the end of 31st March, 2000, It should be extended further, otherwise, the farmers will experience a lot of hardships. I would request the hon. Minister to extend the period beyond 31.3.2000, to a further period of 5-6 months so that the farmers may dispose off the paddy.

श्री शांता कुमार: सभापति जी, मेरी बातचीत हो गई है और वे सेटिस्फाइड हैं कि इससे हमारा काम हो जाएगा।

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of this House to an urgent matter. Sir, more than hundred youth belonging to the Assom Yuva Parishad are staging a dharna in the Jantar Mantar area. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not asked you to speak on that. I thought you are putting a supplementary. *(Interruptions)*. No, no. *(Interruptions)* Nothing on this. *(Interruptions)*. Please sit down. Now, Papers to be laid on the Table. *(Interruptions)* I thought you wanted to put a question. This is not a question. *(Interruptions)* It is not a supplementary. Now, Papers to be laid on the Table.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Export of Agricultural products

304. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of agricultural products for which exports have been permitted by Government;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned from export of the agricultural products during 1998-99; and

(c) the names of those agricultural products for which special assistance or grant is provided for by Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Export of all agricultural commodities except the following are free:

	Item	Export Policy
1.	Beef	Prohibited
2.	Onions	Canalised
3.	Gum Karaya	Canalised
4.	Wheat, wheat products and Coarse grains	Free subject to quantitative ceilings to be notified by DGFT from time to time
5.	Niger seeds	Canalised
6.	Pulses	Free in consumer packs upto 5 kgs
7.	Edible oils	Free in consumer packs except Groundnut oil export of which in consumer packs above 5 Kgs is restricted.
8.	Sugar	Restricted subject to quantitative ceilings to be notified by DGFT from time to time

(b) The total value of agricultural products exported during 1998-99 was Rs. 25224.63 crores.

(c) the Government has been providing financial assistance for enhancing production and productivity improvement in quality, development of packaging, improvement of infrastructure and other measures to facilitate exports of agricultural products. Benefits under these measures are available for all agricultural products.

Air freight subsidy is being provided for exports of perishable floricultural products, fresh fruits and vegetables and hatching eggs. For the Current year, items eligible for subsidy are strawberries, papaya (solo variety), lychees, pineapple, cherry, okra brinjal, bittergourd, green chilly, spinach, cherry, tomato, cut flowers, line plants/ bulbs including tissue culture products, green (spring) onion and hatching eggs.

Proposals cleared by FIPB

*306. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of proposals cleared by Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) after 13th October, 1999 togetherwith amount in each case;

(b) the details of the proposals; and

(c) whether scrutiny of the proposals was done as per the established norms?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Sir, FIPB is only a recommendatory body, on the recommendations of which Government takes decisions. Government have approved 174 proposals involving a total investment of Rs. 2431 crores since 13th October, 1999. The details are given in the Annexure. [*see* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 47]

All the proposals were considered and recommended by FIPB in accordance with the extant notified guidelines, sectoral policies on FDI and in consultation with the concerned Administrative Ministries/Departments.

Export Processing Zones

†*308. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that seven export processing zones are operational in the country;

(b) if not, their total number and the number of units that are operational;

(c) whether is it also a fact that Government provide additional facilities to these zones so that they may accord priority export;

(d) if so, total value of export done by these zones during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, separately; and

(e) the percentage of such export in comparison to the total exports made during each of the above mentioned years, separately?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) the Government of India has set up seven Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in the country at Kandla (Gujarat), Mumbai (Maharashtra), Noida (Uttar Pradesh), Madras (Tamil Nadu), Cochin (Kerala), Falta (West Bengal) and Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). As on 1st December, 1999, 533 units are in operation in the EPZs.

(c) The entitlements to the units in EPZs include exemption from Custom/Excise duty on capital goods, raw materials etc., 10 years income-tax holiday, re-imbursement of Central Sales Tax paid on purchase from outside the State, foreign equity participation, facility to sell a part of production in the domestic market and an upgraded infrastructure.

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(d) and (e) Exports from EPZs, indicating also its share in the total exports of the country are given below:

Year	*Exports from EPZs (Rs. Crores)*	*%age of EPZ exports in the total exports*
1996-97	4338.92	3.65
1997-98	4817.92	3.70
1998-99	5252.48	3.71

Anti-Dumping duties investigations

*309. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how many anti-dumping duties investigations have been initiated during the last three years, year wise;

(b) what are the different items involved;

(c) how many cases have been successfully decided; and

(d) what are the rates of duties introduced, item wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) 41 anti-dumping investigations have been initiated during the last three years. The year wise details are given below:—

Year	*No. of Cases Initiated*
1997	7
1998	9
1999 (till date)	25
TOTAL	41

(b) The Anti-dumping investigation are initiated on the basis of fully documented petition filed by Domestic Industry. The items involved during the last three years are Vitamin-C, Magnesium, Met Coke, Polystyrene, Hot Rolled Coils, Lovastatin, Ortho Chloro Benzaldehyde, Acrylic Fibre, Calcium Carbide, Sea Water Magnesia, P Tert Butyl Catechol, Citric Acid, Industrial Sewing Needles, EPDM, SBR, Hard Ferrite Ring Magnets, Low Carbon Ferro Chrome, PTFE, Thermal Sensitive Paper, Poly Staple Fibre, Nylon Tyre Cord Fibre, NBR, Barium Carbonate, Sodium Cyanide, Purified Terepthalic Acid, Optical Fibre, Seamless Tube, Soda Ash, Oxo Alcohols, Metronidazole, Photographic Paper, Aniline, Sodium Nitrite, Pthalic Anhydride and Seamless Grade Alloy.

(c) The imposition of Anti-dumping Duty will depend upon the evidence being shown regarding dumping, injury to the domestic industry and a causal link being established between dumping and injury. The details of Anti-dumping cases where definitive duties have been imposed during the last three years is given below:—

Year	*No. of Cases Decided*
1997	4
1998	12
1999	11

(d) The details about the anti-dumping cases where definitive duties have been imposed and other cases where provisional duties have been imposed and pending final duties with the range of duties are given in Annexure [*see* Appendix 188, Annexure no. 48]

Facilities at Industrial Growth Centre, Hassan

*310. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the facilities available at Industrial Growth Centre at Hassan (Karnataka);

(b) the amount allocated by the Central Government so far in setting up this Growth Centre;

(c) whether Government propose to set up any Industrial unit near the Growth Centre; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) Under the Growth Centre Scheme the growth centre approved at Hassan in Karnataka has been released full central assistance of Rs. 10 crores. The central assistance is released to the State Government to assist the State Government in creation of infrastructure development facilities, physically establish the Growth Centre and attract investment by industrial units. The Hassan Growth Centre is being implemented by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board.

The Hassan Growth Centre has made considerable progress as per report from the State Industries Department; 1830 acres of land has been acquired, of which 655 acres has been developed and 1175 acres is under development. An expenditure of Rs. 61.08 crores has been incurred. The infrastructure development has completed Phase—I of the Project which includes internal roads, side lanes, internal power distribution lines and water supply lines, which continues to progress. In respect of water supply a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day capacity creation is under execution from the Hemavati Reservoir. This work is in full swing. The Karnataka Electricity Board has been allotted 5 acres for setting up of 2×20 MVA sub-station. So far 56 industrial units have been allotted plots in the growth centre.

(c) and (d) Under the Growth Centre Scheme, the Central Government is not required to set up industrial units. The Central Government acts as a faciliator and it is for the State Government to attract investment in the industrial growth centres.

Implementation of VRS SAIL

*311. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) since when the Voluntary Retirement Scheme in steel plants under Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) has been implemented;

(b) the number of officers and employees who have been benefited every year under this scheme during last five years, plant-wise;

(c) the number of officers and employees retired and the new appointments made against them in these five years; and

(d) the details of sanctioned posts abolished in these five years, plant-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS) have been implemented in the steel plants under Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) during 1986—1993, 1998-1999.

(b) The information is given in enclosed statement - I (*See* below)

(c) The information given in enclosed Statement - II (See below)

(d) In SAIL, manpower is regulated and controlled through an Annual Human Resource Budget and there is no system of sanctioned posts. However, between 1995-96 and 1999-2000 (upto 31.10.1999), the manpower has been reduced by 33247.

Statement-I

Number of Officers and Employees who have been benefited under VRS from 1995-96 to 1999-2000 (upto 31.10.1999) Plant-wise (Excluding Subsidiaries) is as follows:

	VRS 1998			VRS 1999		
SAIL PLANTS	Executive	Non-Executive	Total	Executive	Non-Executive	Total
Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP)	107	1063	1170	515	2882	3397
Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP)	121	1133	1254	294	2890	3184
Rourkala Steel Plant (RSP)	118	1083	1201	400	2219	2619
Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL)	62	846	908	241	992	1233
Alloy Steels Plant (ASP)	117	473	650	298	1231	1529
Salem Steel Plant (SSP)	12	26	38	21	40	61
Others	61	693	754	242	1352	1594
Grand Total	658	5317	5975	2011	11606	13617

Note: There was no VRS in operation between 1995-96 and 1997-98.

Statement II

Number of officers and Employees who have retiried (Both by way of Voluntary Retirement and Natural Separations) and New Appointments made during 1995-96 to 1999-2000 (upto 31.10.1999) is as follows:

Year	Retirement		Appointment	
	Officers (A)	Employees (B)	Officers (C)	Employees (D)
1995-96	1192	6625	660	4904
1996-97	1336	7254	340	3897
1997-98	1567	9011	330	2156
1998-99	1100	6849	141	1126
1999-2000	2250	12092	12	139
Total	7445	41831	1483	12222
Grant Total	(A) + (B)	49276	(C) + (D)	13705

Note: The above figures are exclusive of Subsidiaries.

Industrialisation in Meghalaya

*312. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of industrial units being run in the private and public sector in the State of Meghalaya as on 31st October, 1999;

(b) the total amount of capital investment made in these units in the State; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Government to increase the investment in Meghalaya during the Ninth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) The number of Industrial Units being run in the private and public sector in the State of Meghalaya is not centrally maintained. However,

between August, 1991 and 31st October, 1999, 17 Industrial Enterpreneur Memoranda (IEM) have been field for setting up units in the non SSI Sector in the State of Meghalaya with proposed total investment of Rs. 271 crores. As against this, only one unit has reported implementation of the IEM till 31st October, 1999. The details are given in enclosed statement. (*see* below)

As per the Public Enterprises Survey 1997-98 there are two Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) operating in the state of Meghalaya as on 31.3.98. The details are as follows:—

Name of PSU	Investment
1. North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corp.	Rs. 7 Crores
2. North Eastern Electric Power Corp.	Rs. 2234 Crores

In addition, as on 30.9.99 a total number of 2598 SSI Units have been granted permanent registration.

(c) There is no proposal to set up any new public sector unit in Meghalaya during the 9th Plan period. In the light of the present liberalized economic environment wherein the private investment has a major role for setting up industries, the Central Government only provides supplementary assistance. A new Industrial policy for the North Eastern Region (including Meghalaya) was notified on 24th December, 1997 to promote industrial development in this region. The major highlights of the policy include the following:—

(i) expenditure on Growth Centres would be funded through central assistance upto Rs. 15 crores;

(ii) funding pattern for Integrated Infrastructure Development Centres (IIDCs) has been changed to 4:1 between the Government of India and Small Industries Bank of India (instead of 2:3);

(iii) the Transport Subsidy Scheme has been extended upto 31.3.2007;

(iv) new units located in Growth Centres and IIDCs have been exempted from payment of income tax and excise duty for a period of ten years. In addition, 15% capital investment subsidy on plant and machinery is admissible subject to a ceiling of Rs. 30 lakh; and

(v) a Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for industrial units has been introduced with 100% subsidy on premium for 10 years.

Statement

Name of Undertaking/ Address	Location	Item of manufacture	Proposed Annual capacity	Acknowledge-ment No./ Date
Jaintia Alloys Pvt. Ltd. 20 Vrindavan Market (2nd Floor) Athgaon, Guwahati, Kamrup Assam 781001	Ribhoi Meghalaya	Ingots of Iron and Steel other than High Carbon Steel etc.	12000.00 Tonnes	386 16.9.97

Actual Investment (Rs. Crore): 1 Memorandum No.: 1685 Date: 22/04/1996 Production Commenced on 01/04/1997

Foreign Trade and Balance of Payment Position

*313 SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the position of foreign trade and balance of payment as on 30th November, 1999, item-wise;

(b) whether our trade has been in deficit;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The trade balance for the period April-June, 1999-2000 is US $ −4134 million and current account balance

is US $ −2423 million as per the latest data. The items-wise details are as follows:

(Value in US $ Million)

	1999-2000 (April-June)
Exports	8148
Imports	12282
Trade Balance	−4134
Invisibles (net)	1711
Non factor services	−278
Investment income	−811
Private transfers	2743
Official grants	57
Current account balance	−2423

(b) to (d) As per DGCI&S provisional data, the trade deficit has been estimated at US $ 5796 million for the period April-October, 1999-2000. The trade deficit is the excess of imports over exports. A large proportion of our imports such as oil, capital goods, raw materials, etc. are necessary to sustain the growth of the economy. The steps to improve the balance of trade position include initiatives for attaining a high growth of exports and attracting capital flows in the form of foreign investments. The process of liberalisation has been carried forward with the changes introduced in the Exim Policy 1997—2002 and the focus is on improving the export competitiveness and minimising the transaction costs and delays faced by exporters. Services exports have been brought in the ambit of Exim Policy.

Decline in Export of Rice and Cotton

†*314. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of rice and cotton from the country has continuously been declining in comparison to the past years;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if not, the quantity of export of the above articles during the years 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(c) what was the value of the said articles;

(d) the reasons for decrease, if any; and

(e) the target fixed by Government for export of each of the above articles during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The total quantity and value of exports of rice during the last 3 years is as under:—

Quantity : lakh metric tonnes
Value : in Rs. crores

Year	Basmati Rice		Non-Basmati Rice	
(April-March)	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1996-97	5.23	1247.64	19.89	1924.72
1997-98	5.93	1685.62	17.96	1685.38
1998-99(P)	6.01	1866.25	43.40	4334.55
Apr-Aug, 99 (P)	2.01	641.03	4.67	499.85
Apr-Aug, 98	2.69	807.46	13.72	1346.26

(SOURCE: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

The total quantity and value of export of cotton during the last 3 years (cotton year w.e.f. Oct.-September) is as under:—

Year	Qty. (in lakh bales of 170 kg each)	Value (in Rs. Crores)
1996-97	16.82	1655.00
1997-98	3.4973	316.85
1998-99 (as on 27.10.99)	0.98720	83.60

(SOURCE: Office of Textile Commissioner, Bombay)

(d) The exports of rice would depend upon International demand and supply position, domestic demand and supply, international and

domestic prices, consumer preferences, and varieties traded. Low international demand and better crop production in rice consuming countries has led to the reduction in rice exports from India during the current financial year. Decline in export of cotton is due to the fact that the domestic prices of *kapas* are higher as compared to international prices.

(e) Targets fixed for exports of rice and cotton are as under:—

Year	Rice (US $ Million)	Quantity of Cotton in lakh bales (of 170 Kg each) released for exports
1996-97	706	14.42
1997-98	676	8.2
1998-99	1057	5.0
1999-2000	1035	5.0

Rice targets are for the period April-March. Cotton released for exports is for the period October-September.

Recovery of Dues from Senior Politicians

*315. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a suo moto action, the Delhi High Court has directed Government to initiate immediate necessary action for recovery of dues from senior politicians, including former Prime Ministers, who had been allotted accommodation beyond their entitled category;

(b) whether the Court has further restrained Government from making any such allotment in future without bringing it to the notice of the court; and

(c) if so, what follow-up action is proposed to give effect to this directive?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Hon'ble High Court, in its order dated 27.10.99, in WP(C) No. 2560/97 has directed, inter alia, that the Government should follow their own guidelines and any allotment outside the existing guidelines be made only with the approval of the Cabinet Committee and after intimation to the Court.

(c) Follow up action is being taken in accordance with the orders of the Hon'ble Court.

Reduction in Import of Newsprint

*316. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan of Government to reduce import of newsprint in this country;

(b) if so, what is the exact plan; and

(c) the reasons to import so much of newsprint?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Newsprint is classified under Exim code sub-heading 48.01 and import is permitted without an import license, subject to Actual User condition, by those holding "Registration Certificate" issued by the Registrar of News Papers for India (RNI), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The demand of newsprint in the Country is met both by import and indigenous production and the quantum of imports in a particular year is dependent on the demand and supply position. However, a number of steps have been taken to increase the indigenous production of newsprint so that dependence on imported newsprint reduces gradually. These steps include the following:

(1) Newsprint Industry has been delicensed.

(2) Newsprint has been exempted from excise duty.

(3) There is a concessional rate of Custom Duty @ 5% on pulp for manufacture of newsprint.

(4) With a view to increasing the indigenous availability of newsprint, paper mills producing newsprint conforming to BIS standards are placed in Schedule I of the Newsprint Control Order, 1962, declaring them as mills manufacturing newsprint.

Central Aid to the Institutes working for Poor in Chamoli (U.P.)

*317. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Member of Parliament has forwarded a case regarding Central aid to the institutes working for the poor in the District Chamoli, U.P. on the 10th June, 1999;

(b) whether the Government of Uttar Pradesh has forwarded a case of M/s. Naveen Institute of Computer Education vide letter No. 168/26-2-99/11/54/99, dated 24th April, 1999 for the Central grant; and

(c) if so, the detailf thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) This Ministry had received the case of Naveen Institute of Computer Education from the Government of Uttar Pradesh vide their letter No. 168/26-2-99/11/54/99, dated 6th April, 1999 (not 24th April, 1999) for the grant. The case was considered and could not be acceded to. The organization was informed on 17th November, 1999 accordingly.

Export of Software

*318 SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the extent of export of software during the current financial year;

(b) the States from where the software has been exported, together with the quantum thereof; and

(c) the quantum of software exported from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The estimated export of software for the first half of the current financial year (April-September 1999) is Rs. 8000 crores: (Source: Electronics & Computer Software Export Promotion Council).

(b) and (c) Ministry of Commerce maintains export data for the country as a whole and not State-wise.

Low Earning by Doordarshan through Commercials

*319. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total revenue earned by Doordarshan through Commercials in current financial year;

(b) what steps are being taken to improve this revenue by competitive rates vis-a-vis private channels;

(c) what are the main reasons for low revenue by Doordarshan; and

(d) what are the thrust areas which can be explored for better earnings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Prasar Bharati has reported that a sum of Rs. 294.87 crores has been earned by Doordarshan through commercial advertisements during the period March, 1999 to 15th December, 1999. Projected earnings in the current financial year are to the tune of Rs. 500 crores.

(b) to (d) According to Prasar Bharati, fragmentation of viewership, increased competition from satellite channels and economic slackness are the main reasons behind Doordarshan not getting the desired/targetted revenue. Prasar Bharati has reported that telecast of high quality programmes, rationalisation of commercial rate card, introduction of holidays and Saturday feature films, improvement in quality, content and transmission of its regional programmes, attractive packaging and presentation and digital transmission in satellite mode are some major steps taken to increase its commercial revenue.

Land available for Housing Projects in Delhi

320. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of land likely to be made available for the housing projects in Delhi with the repeal of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 and

(b) what steps have, so far, been taken to enforce the said Act and how much land has been released in the process?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) The Government of NCT of Delhi has reported that approximately 400 hectares of land will be available for housing and infrastructure development following the repeal of the Act. However, the exact availability of land for housing projects will be determined on the basis of Land Use in the Master Plan, Building Bye-Laws and other regulations in force. The Act automatically stands enforced in Delhi after the repeal of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

WTO agreement on Agriculture

1834. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that WTO agreement on agriculture is scheduled to be reviewed in the year 2000;

(b) whether the perceptions and interests of the developed and under-developed countries are at divergence;

(c) whether there is a need to protect the interests of our country against decisions detrimental to our interest; and

(d) if so, what are the Government's plans in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) In terms of Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, members have agreed that negotiations for continuing the reform process in trade in agriculture will be initiated one year before the end of the implementation period, which ends at the end of the year 2000. This implies that negotiations on

the agreement on Agriculture are mandated with effect from 1.1.2000.

(b) There does not appear to be divergence in perception and interests between various countries in the agriculture sector based on their respective state of overall developments but such a divergence in their perceptions is due to huge variance in the quantum of overall support given by them to their respective agriculture sectors.

(c) India's interests will be safeguarded and strongly projected.

(d) The Ministry of Commerce and Industry had commissioned a detailed study on the subject "The Uruguay Round Agreement and Indian Agriculture: Strategic Issues for the future." Ministry of Agriculture has also got studies conducted through Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Delhi and Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad on related topics. A process of consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture, other connected Ministries, State Governments, and with political parties, has also been initiated and the inputs received in the consultation process and through other channels including the Study Reports, would be fully made use of in the forthcoming negotiations to protect the interests of our country.

Time Taken for Deciding Anti-Dumping Duties Cases

1835. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the average time taken by Government to decide about anti-dumping duties cases after the same is initiated; and

(b) how does it compare with other countries of the world?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) As per the anti-dumping provisions the time allowed for the investigations and submission of final findings is one year from the date of initiation of the investigation except in special circumstances, when this time can be extended by 6 months with the approval of the Central Government. Preliminary findings are, however, finalised in 4-5 months.

(b) The time taken in EU is 7-8 months on an average for completing preliminary investigations and imposing anti-dumping duty.

The time taken in some other countries, as per the Annual Report, 1998, of WTO is given below:

S. No.	Name of the Country	Average duration in days*
1	Austrialia	150
2	New Zealand	166
3	South Africa	379
4	Brazil	391
5	Mexico	492

*Average days between initiation and imposition of provisional measures.

Projects cleared in 1998-99

1836. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how many foreign technical and financial projects have been cleared in 1998-99;

(b) the details of the projects;

(c) whether it is a fact that 90 percent of the projects goes to Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu; and

(d) whether it would not lead to another spate of regional imbalance?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Sir, 564 technical and 1267 financial foreign Direct Investment (FDI) proposals have been approved during April, 1998 to March, 1999. The details of the FDI proposals, including technical collaborations approved are incorporated in Monthly SIA newsletters brought out by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, which are widely circulated including the Library of the House.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Investment by the foreign entrepreneurs in a State depends on various factors such as degree of development of industry and financial infrastructure, the potential size of the market, skilled human and natural resources of the State and also the discal and other incentives provided by the State Government and above all the commercial judgement of the investor.

Upgradation of ITIs in Assam

1837. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for upgradation of Industrial Training Institutes presently functioning in the State of Assam under the Ninth five-Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof, district-wise; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to upgrade the above Institutes in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) There is no proposal at present for upgradation of Industrial Training Institutes in the State of Assam. However, 28 States/Union Territories including Assam participated in a World Bank assisted Vocational Training Project which closed on 31.12.98. Under this project, 13 Government Industrial Training Institutes in Assam were upgraded.

Export of spices and eatables from Andhra Pradesh

1838. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of fruits, vegetables, spices and other food items exported from Andhra Pradesh during the last three years; item-wise and year-wise; and

(b) their effect on domestic market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Details of the quantity of fruits, vegetables, spices and other food items exported from Andhra Pradesh is not available as State-wise data on exports is not maintained.

(b) The total quantity of fruits, vegetables and other food items exported is not significant compared to the total production of these items. Hence, it is generally unlikely to have any adverse impact on the domestic market. However, exports will help in maximising farm income and earn foreign exchange for the country.

Import of Recyclable Plastics

1839. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are importing recyclable plastic every month from Europe despite proposed ban on use of carry bags;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the progress on finding a biodegradable substitute for plastic carry bags?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The import of plastic waste and scrap is being regulated in accordance with the Public Notice No. 392-PN/92-97 dated 1st January, 1997, issued by Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, which lays down detailed safeguards and ensures that no toxic/hazardous material is imported. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has issued the Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999. These rules prohibit use of carry bags and containers made of recycled plastics for storing, carrying, dispensing or packaging of food stuffs and do not impose a blanket ban on the manufacture and use of plastic carry bags in the country. Environment friendly materials such as biodegradable plastics are at various states of research and development in the country. The technology for the manufacture of biodegradable plastics is not yet fully commercialised in the country.

Multinational and foreign companies operationg in India

1840. SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of multinational and foreign companies operating in India; and

(b) how many of them are producing or manufacturing consumer goods?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Sir, a total number of 15604 approvals (both financial and technical) have been granted to foreign companies, including multinationals, from August, 1991 to 31st August, 1999 of which 790 have been approved for production/ manufacture of consumer goods, to which the condition of dividend balancing has been applied in consonance with the policy.

Cases filed against SAIL under Anti-Dumping Provisions

1841. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Government filed a case against SAIL under Anti-Dumping Provision in that country;

(b) if so, what steps government have taken against such measures;

(c) how many of such cases have been slapped against the Indian steel producers by the advanced countries in Europe and America, quantity of steel involved in it and the amount of total loss;

(d) whether any retaliatory measures have been taken by the government in such cases; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to stop dumping of steel in India?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Defending Anti-Dumping cases is basically the responsibility of the targetted Indian Companies and the Government of India is not a party to Anti-Dumping proceedings. Government of India, however, provides the necessary advice and assistance to such companies.

(c) The following are the cases currently under investigation against the Indian steel companies:

Sl. No.	Product	Country
1.	Hot Rolled Coils	European Union
2.	Quarto Plates	European Union
3.	Carbon Steel Plates	USA
4.	Carbon Steel Plates	Canada

It is very difficult to estimate at this stage the quantity and value of steel involved in the above investigations. However, as opportunity to export in future will depend upon the outcome of the cases, loss in terms of losing good markets may have a bearing on both volume and value.

(d) Anti-Dumping investigations in various countries are carried out under the provisions of "WTO Agreement on Anti-Dumping". Governments are not supposed to initiate retaliatory measures against such investigations. However, in the event of any breach of the Agreement by any country while carrying out Anti-Dumping investigations, Government of India can take recourse to the dispute Settlement Mechanism of WTO.

(e) Government of India has set up the "Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties" in the Ministry of Commerce. The Designated Authority on receipt of an application on behalf of the concerned domestic industry or otherwise, initiates necessary action for investigations and subsequent imposition of Anti-Dumping Duties, when there is sufficient evidence that the dumped imports are causing or threatening to cause material injury to the Indian industry producing like articles. On a petition received from SAIL and others, India has already imposed Anti-Dumping Duties on the imports of Hot Rolled Coils from the CIS countries.

Tobacco storage in Andhra Pradesh

1842. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco growers, especially in Andhra Pradesh face storage problems; and

(b) if so, the measures proposed to modernise storage system to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Ban on Export on Onion

1843. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had imposed ban on the export of onion;

(b) if so, when and whether Government now proposes to withdraw the ban on onion export; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government has allowed export of 100,00 tonnes of all varieties of onions for the next two months i.e. December, 1999 and January, 2000.

Decline in Export of Car

1844. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite boom in car sales/production in India its export has gone down during the current fiscal year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps proposed, if any, for improving export of car in future; and

(d) units exported by five major players during this period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The fall or negative trend in the export of cars is mainly due to the fact that markets in the developed countries are saturated with new car models brought out by automobile industries in these countries, protective mechanism adopted by most of the Asian countries through high tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions and an unfavourable global economic condition particularly on account of economic/currency crisis in South and East Asia, Russian and other East European countries.

(c) There is no exclusive scheme for promotion of export of cars. However, promotion of exports of this item, like other items in the

Engineering Sector has been the constant endeavour of the Government. Measures being provided to boost exports, including that of cars, consist of various provisions under the Export-Import Policy including Duty Exemption Scheme, Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, Special Import Licence, Duty Drawback Scheme, Exemption under Section 80 HHC of Income Tax Act, Assistance from Market Development Fund etc.

(d) The details of export of cars by five major exporters during the period April-October, 1999 are given below:

S.No.	Name of the exporter	Number of Units exported during April-October, 1999
1.	Maruti Udyog Ltd.	9,360
2.	Daewoo Motors (India) Ltd.	350
3.	Mercedes Benz India Ltd.	292
4.	Ind Auto Ltd.	147
5.	Telco	60

SOURCE: Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)

Amendments of Patents Act

1845. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Patents (Amendment) Bill will be brought forward in the Winter Session;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the various interest groups have been consulted and their view points incorporated in the amending Bill?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) In accordance with the obligations contained in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), India is

required to amend the Patents Act, 1970 by 31 December, 1999, in respect of scope of patentable inventions, providing for exclusions from patentability, providing a uniform term of patent protection of 20 years, alignment of compulsory licensing provisions, etc.

Government has maintained a close interface with individuals organisations and interest groups concerned and has also organised a series of Interactive Sessions on 'Approaches to the Indian Patent Law' in different cities of country between 28 June, 1999 to 9 August, 1999.

Publication of Educational Books by US based Company

1846. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal of US based company has been cleared for setting up 100 per cent owned publishing firm for educational books in India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Indian companies were unable to produce good educational books; and

(d) how a foreign firm can produce appropriate educational material for our country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. In accordance with the existing policy, a proposal of US based company for setting up a wholly owned subsidiary to undertake the business of publishing and distributing educational and reference books and educational materials, subject to the condition that the company would not undertake any activity prohibited under the Print-media Policy of 1955, has been cleared on the basis of recommendations of the Administrative Ministry i.e. Department of Secondary and Higher Education.

Setting up of Cement Industry

1847. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to set up some cement industry in the country during Ninth Plan;

(b) if so, whether any such unit is proposed to be set up in Orissa;

(c) whether Government have also a proposal to expand the existing cement units; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (d) There is no proposal in the Ninth Plan to set up new cement plants or expand the existing plants in the Central Public Sector including Orissa.

Performance of Tea and Coffee Industury

1848. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to review the performance of tea and coffee industry in the country;

(b) if so, the production and export of tea and coffee during last three years; and

(c) the prospect thereof in 1999-2000?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government and the respective Commodity Boards review the performance of tea and coffee industry from time to time. The production and export of tea and coffee during the last three years were as follows:—

Year	Tea (in Mn. Kgs)		Coffee (in Metric Tonnes)	
	Production	Export	Production	Export
1996-97	775.31	169.04	205000	181295
1997-98	838.02	211.26	228000	179059
1998-99	850.25	205.19	265000	211623

(c) The estimate of production and export of Tea and Coffee during 1999-2000 is as follows:—

Year	Tea (in Mn. Kgs)		Coffee (in Metric Tonnes)	
	Production	Export	Production	Export
1999-2000	825.00	180.00	282000	210000

Import of Marble

1849. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government took a policy decision sometime back to allow import of marble under OGL;

(b) if so, how many licences were issued for import after the declaration of this policy;

(c) what quantity of marble was imported and whether it affected the Indian marble industry in any way;

(d) how much foreign exchange was involved till date in marble import; and

(e) what are Government's plan to protect the interest of Indian marble industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Marble in various forms and its products, as classified under Exim Code Sub-heading 25.15 and 68.02 of ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items 1997-2002, are permitted to be imported against surrender of Special import Licence, subject to specified minimum import prices. These special import licences are obtained by the importers from the market. No licences for import of marble and marble products are required to be issued by the Government.

(c) to (e) Total quantity of marble and marble products imported under Exim Code sub-headings 25.15 and 68.02 during the period

April to June, 1999 was 6185.6 M.T. for a value of Rs. 7.84 crores as per the provisional import figures available with the Government. Indian marble industry is unlikely to be seriously affected by this level of imports. Marble is a minor mineral and the policy regarding development of this product is framed by respective State Governments. However, recently Department of Mines, Government of India, has constituted a Group on Marble Development, which will work under the supervision of the Granite Development Council, to look into the issues relevant to the development of marble mining and industry.

Export of Engineering Goods

1850. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of his Ministry in the export of engineering goods during the last three years;

(b) whether there has been decline in the export of engineering goods in 1998-99;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the steps taken by Government to increase the export of engineering goods; and

(e) the target set for 1999-2000?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The performance of Engineering Goods Exports during the last three years is as under:—

Year	Rs. Cr.	US $ Mn.
1996-97	14395.74	4055.00
1997-98	16478.68	4433.95
1998-99	16001.61	3803.51

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The major cause for negative trend in the engineering goods exports has been the continued unfavourable global economic condition particularly on account of economic/currency crisis in

South and East Asia, Russia and other East European countries as also in major Latin American countries. Fall in oil prices also had its impact on our exports to Middle East. Quite a number of items for which good export prospects exist in developed countries could not do well due to restrictive trade measures including anti dumping and anti-subsidy measures by these countries.

(d) The promotion of exports has been the constant endeavour of the Government. Measures to boost exports, including those from the engineering sector, consist of various provisions under the Export-Import Policy including Duty Exemption Scheme, Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, Special Import Licence, Duty Drawback Scheme, Exemption under Section 80 HHC of Income Tax Act, Assistance from Market Development Fund etc. Engineering goods exporters also received promotional support through various activities of the Engineering Export Promotion Council like participation in internationl engineering goods fairs, visit of engineering goods delegation abroad, Buyer-Seller Meets, Market Studies, organising specialised exhibitions in India etc.

(e) The target for Engineering Goods Sector for the year 1999-2000 is US $ Mn. 4550.

New Export Policy

1851. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new policy of export is in the offing;

(b) what will be the feature of the new export policy; and

(c) what are Government's plans for increasing exports from our country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The review of the export policy is an ongoing process. The amended Export-Import Policy is notified in the month of March every year. Accordingly, revised policy shall be announced before the commencement of the next financial year after considering various suggestions received from the Trade and Industry and various ministries and export promotion concern.

(c) Government had announced various measures on 31.3.99 to increase the competitiveness of Indian exports and to reduce the

transactional cost and time with a view to providing level playing field to Indian exporters. These measures include extension of zero-duty EPCG shceme to textile sector and certain sub-sectors of chemicals; exemption of additional customs duty under zero duty EPCG scheme for marine and software sectors; introduction of Annual Advance Licence Scheme; rationalisation of EOU/EPZ scheme; recognition for export of services, decentralisation of decision making and time bound disposal of various categories of applications.

Potential for Newsprint Production

1852. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that we have a higher potential for newsprint production now; and

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to increase indigenous newsprint production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has taken a number of steps to increase the indigenous production of newsprint which include:—

(i) Newsprint Industry has been delicensed subject to locational policy.

(ii) Newsprint has been exempted from excise duty.

(iii) There is a concessional rate of Customs Duty @ 5% on pulp for manufacture of newsprint.

(iv) With a view to encouraging the indigenous availability of newsprint, such paper mills which are producing newsprint conforming to BIS standards are placed in Schedule-I to the Newsprint Control Order, 1962 declaring them as mills manufacturing newsprint.

Import of Newsprint

1853. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of newsprint expected to be imported this year;

(b) whether we are increasingly becoming import-dependent on newsprint; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The total import of newsprint during the period April to August, 1999 was 1.53 lakh MT as per the provisional import figures available with the Government. The import of newsprint is allowed without a licence to actual users. The total quantity expected to be imported this year will depend on demand and supply situation in the market.

(b) and (c) The demand for newsprint in the country is met both by import and indigenous production. It will be seen from these figures that the quantity of newsprint imported is not showing an increasing trend. The relevant figures for the last three years are as follows:

Period	Imports Quantity (in lakh tonnes)	Value (Rs. crores)
1996-97	5.47	1077.43
1997-98	5.39	1146.98
1998-99	4.26	1003.62

News-item captioned 'Desh mein Udyog ki halat chintajanak'

†1854. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in Dainik Jagran, dated 28th November, 1999, under the caption "Desh mein Udyog ki halat chintajanak";

(b) whether Government have prepared any action-plan to improve the condition of industries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when the plan is likely to be implemented?

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Data released subsequently by Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) on 10th December, 1999, reveal that the growth rate of industrial production has improved and that during October, 1999 the growth rate was 8.7% against 0.0% during October last year.

(b) to (d) The steps taken to improve industrial production, interalia, are:

1. special package announced for revival of growth in exports;
2. repeal of ULCRA and incentive to house ownership;
3. the Government has allowed buy back of shares and inter-corporate loans to boost investment and revive the capital market;
4. a new power policy announced;
5. excise duties rationalized;
6. Income tax rate and custom duties on infrastructure projects reduced;
7. liberalization of inflow of FDI/NRI/OCB investment and the guidelines for foreign equity investment in NBFC have further been modified;
8. setting up of Foreign Investment Implementation Authority (FIIA) to provide single point interface between foreign investors and Government machinery;
9. setting up of National Accreditation Boards including a National Patent Office and a National Benchmarking Patent House to promote integration of best practices in the Indian Industry;
10. restoration of 100% MODVAT credit;
11. reduction in CRR;
12. withdrawal of interest rate surcharge on import finance.

Trade Deficit

*1855. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of trade deficit of the country for the last five year

(b) the reasons therefor; and

(c) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) As per the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics data the trade deficit during the last five years in US $ terms is as under:—

Year	Trade deficit (US $ Million)
1994-95	2324
1995-96	4881
1996-97	5662
1997-98	6478
1998-99	8245*

*Provisional data

(b) and (c) Trade deficit is the excess of imports over exports which can be restricted by effective export promotion measures. A number of export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government which includes reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation, simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions.

Industrial Growth Centres

1856. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the district-wise industrial growth centres functioning in the different parts of the country, particularly in the State of Assam; and

(b) the details of funds granted to all growth centres during each of the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) A list of growth

centres approved in various States, including Assam is given in Annexure [*see* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 49]. These are at various stages of implementation.

(b) Details of funds released by the Central Government under the Growth Centre Scheme to these growth centres during the last five years are as under:

Year	Amont (Rs. In lakhs)
1994-95	80.39
1995-96	46.16
1996-97	20.96
1997-98	25.00
1998-99	20.00

FDI during current financial year

†1857. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Foreign Direct Investment which have been permitted by Government, so far, during the current financial year;

(b) the actual FDI made, so far, during the current financial year, alongwith the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the foreign capital permitted in infrastructure sector and the details of amount invested?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) Sir, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) approval during the current financial year (from 1st April, 1999 to 31st Oct., 1999) including Infrastructure Sector is Rs. 12500.89 crore and the actual inflow of FDI during the above said period is Rs. 6430.10 crore. No separate data regarding State-wise breakup of actual inflow is centrally maintained.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Infrastructure Facilities at Jajmau, Kanpur

†1858. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that a project costing Rs. 11.30 crores had been sanctioned as a joint project for upgradation of infrastructure facilities in Jajmau, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh;

(b) Whether it is also a fact that Government have to release payment of Rs. 1.50 crore against this project;

(c) If so, the reason for not releasing this amount even after the utilisation of State's share in it; and

(d) by when the amount will be released?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) State Government of Uttar Pradesh has submitted a project costing Rs. 11.30 crores for upgradation of infrastructural facilities in Jajmau, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh to central Government. Under the CIB Scheme, the Central Government has sanctioned only the power system component of the project at a total cost of Rs. 3.50 crores.

(b) The Cenral Government has released Rs. 1.75 crores being its share of the sanctioned project to the State Government.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

Export of Agricultural Products

1859. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it a fact that the export growth of agriculture and allied products like pulses, tobacco, sugar and molasses etc. has been registering a negative growth for the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government proposed to take to augment the export of these items?

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) the major agro commodities exported are pulses, rice wheat, cereals, tobacoo, spices, cashew, seasame and nigerseeds, groundnut, spirit and beverages guargum meal, oil meal, shellac, sugar, meat and meat preparations, poultry and dairy products, floriculture products, fruit and vegetables seeds, fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and juices and vegetables etc. The value of agro items exported excluding marine products tea, coffee, castor oil and cotton during the last three years is as under:-

Year	Value (Rs.000 crores)
1997-98	15.2
1998-99	15.96
1999-2000 (April-August)	5.6
1998-99 (April-August)	6.3

SOURCE: DGCI&S, Calcutta

(c) The Government have taken various measures including provision of financial assistance to boost production and export of agricultural products. The measures taken to enhance export of agriculture products inter alia include:

(i) Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical know how of farmers through demonstration, training and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development of Tropical, Temperate and Arid Zone fruits;

(ii) Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;

(iii) Providing financial assistance to exporter/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of pre-cooling/cold

storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handling systems (Pack Houses);

(iv) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control including adoption of quality systems such as ISO 9000/HACCP at export units;

(v) Grant of air freight subsidy for export of selected fresh vegetables and fresh fruits and floricultural products;

(vi) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially mangoes in overseas markets. Research efforts are on for the use of modern technologies such as Controlled/Modified Atmosphere technologies for increasing the shelf life and for transportation of perishable products such as mangoes and lychees;

(vii) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(viii) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables;

(ix) Providing technical advisory services and other support services to trade and industry including training of farmers for export production, quality control, packaging, transport etc.

Use of Chittagong Port for Development of NER

1860. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to Bangladesh Government to use the Chittagong port for the purpose of commercial development of North Eastern Region; and

(b) whether Government have any proposal to Bangladesh Government for building an express highway connecting Tripura with West Bengal via Bangladesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The Government of India has made

proposals to the Government of Bangladesh for use of the facility of the Chittagong Port.

(b) No, Sir.

Decline in inflow of FDI

1861. MISS NABEL REBELLO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Foreign Direct Investment inflow during the first four months of 1999-2000 was Rs. 1931 crores which is half of the inflow witnessed during the same period a year ago;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the FDI proposals cleared during the first four months also declined by 41 per cent;

(c) whether Government have any plan to remedy the situation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Sir, FDI investment inflow during the first four months of 1999-2000 and FDI proposal cleared for the corresponding period of 1998-1999 is as under:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Total amount of Approvals	Inflow
1999 (Apr.-July)	5738.05	2880.15
1998 (Apr.-July)	11009.11	5417.84

(b) During the first four months of the current financial year 498 FDI proposals have been approved as compared to 450 FDI proposals during the corresponding period of the last financial year.

(c) and (d) The Government takes steps, on a continuous basis, to promote foreign investments such as:—

(i) Providing information regarding 'Projects on Offer' through Websites.

(ii) Organisation of Seminars etc. abroad in consultation and with cooperation of various industry Associations.

(iii) Establishment of Contact with International companies for inviting investments in appropriate projects.

(iv) Providing institutional mechanism for facilitating speedy implementation of projects.

(v) Reviewing FDI Policy from time to time in Order to make it more and more investor friendly.

Abolition of Zero Duty on Import of Capital Goods

1862. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering a proposal to do away with Zero duty on import of capital goods to provide level playing field to the domestic Industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware that a sizeable section of the public and a dominant group of captains of trade and industry have grave misapprehensions with regard to the challenges posed by expected import surge as a result of World Trade Organization Agreement; and

(d) if so, what steps are contemplated in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The facility of import of capital goods without payment of duty is available under Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme and Export Oriented unit/Export Processing Zones schemes. The duty free import of capital goods is also allowed to mega power projects, fertilizer plants etc. The domestic manufacturers supplying capital goods against aforesaid schemes are eligible to the benefit of deemed exports. These benefits include (a)

Special Imprest License for duty free import of inputs required for manufacturing capital goods (b) deemed export drawback (c) refund of Terminal Excise Duty and (d) Special Import license © 6% of the F.O.R. value.

The review of Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme/EOU and EPZ schemes is currently not under consideration.

(c) and (d) The level of protection given to the domestic industry is an autonomous decision of the Government of India as a part of its overall economic policy. Under commitments to the WTO, all agricultural items and about 62% of the industrial tariff lines are bound at various levels. The applied rates of customs duties are, however, by and large below the bound levels committed under WTO. There is thus no cause for any serious apprehensions of a surge in imports.

Improvements in Patent Bill

1863. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Law Commission has suggested many improvements in the Patent (Amendment) Bill vide Hindu, dated the 21st October, 1999;

(b) the summary of the suggested improvements; and

(c) whether Government propose to incorporate these improvements in the bill now before Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) The Law Commission, in its 167th Report on the Patents (Amendment) Bill, 1998, suggested amendments in the Patents (Amendment) Bill, 1998. The report of Law Commission was laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 28th October, 1999. The suggestions of the Law Commission, as relevant to the legislation, were considered. The Patents (Amendment) Bill, 1998 was passed by both Houses of Parliament and it also received the assent of the President on 26th March, 1999.

Approval of FDI Proposals

1864. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of FDI proposals approved during January—October in 1997, 1998 and 1999;

(b) whether there has been deceleration in FDI; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (b) Sir, total amount of FDI approved during January-October, 1997, 1998 and 1999 is as under:—

Jan.-Oct., 1997 :	Rs. 46659.44 crore
Jan.-Oct., 1998 :	Rs. 24453.85 crore
Jan.-Oct., 1999 :	Rs. 23795.58 crore

(c) While investment is dependent on the judgement of investors, deceleration in FDI can be due to factors such as global recession, south East Asian Economic Crisis and Political instability.

Performance in Industrial growth

1865. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minnister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the industrial growth for the first half of 1999-2000 is comparatively impressive at 6.4 per cent but the performance is mainly related to manufacturing and electricity sector and capital goods and consumer non-durable sector has not got any appreciable growth;

(b) whether Governemnt are taking any effective steps to achieve an overall growth target of about 7 per cent during 1999-2000; and

(c) if so, what are the details of these measures and the projection of growth, sector-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) The overall industrial growth and growth rates in manufacturing, electricity

sector, capital goods and consumer non-durable sector during April-October, 1999-2000 and in the corresponding period of 1998-99 show an improvement in most sectors as seen from the table below.

Year	percetage growth rate of sectors				
	manufacturing	electricity	capital goods	Consumer non-durables	Overall
1998-1999 April-Oct	3.5	6.3	11.0	0.9	3.4
1999-2000 April-Oct	7.5	8.1	8.6	2.8	6.9

(a) and (c) Government has not made any projection of the growth rate in industrial production—

The steps taken to improve industrial production, interalia, are:

1. special package announced for revival of growth in exports;
2. repeal of ULCRA and incentive to house ownership;
3. the Government has allowed buy back of shares and inter-corporate loans to boost investment and revive the capital market;
4. a new power policy announced;
5. excise duties rationalized;
6. income tax rate and custom duties on infrastructure projects reduced;
7. liberalization of inflow of FDI/NRI/OCB investment and the guidelines for foreign equity investment in NBFC have further been modified;
8. setting up of Foreign Investment Implementation Authority (FIIA) to provide single point interface between foreign investors and Government machinery;
9. setting up of National Accreditation Boards including a National Patent Office and a National Benchmarking Patent House to promote integration of best practices in the Indian Industry;

10. restoration of 100% MODVAT credit;

11. reduction in CRR;

12. withdrawal of interest rate surcharge on import finance.

Inflow of Foreign Direct Investment

1866. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the data relating to the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for the take over of Indian companies and the percentage of FDI in areas where new manufacturing capacity is created, since the beginning of new economic policy in 1991?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): Sir, the data of inflows including inflows on account of acquisition & mergers including approval granted for creation of new manufacturing capacity for all sectors are maintained by RBI. Since the beginning of new industrial policy, the total year-wise inflows are as under:—

Year (Jan-Dec)	Inflow of FDI Amt. Rs. In crores
1991	315
1992	675
1993	1787
1994	3289
1995	6820
1996	10389
1997	16425
1998	13340
1999 (Jan-Oct)	11093
TOTAL	64169

Export of Tea from Himachal Pradesh

1867. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of tea exported to foreign countries from Himachal Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned during this period;

(c) whether it is a fact that export of tea is showing a declining trend; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to improve this trend?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Tea is exported in blended form either in bulk or in packets. In the process, origin of tea is lost at the time of blending and hence export of tea by origin of production cannot be reliably worked out.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. Export of tea from India during January to September, 1999 has declined by 29.39 mn. kgs as compared to the export during the corresponding period of the previous year.

In order to increase export of tea, the Tea Board is in constant touch with the tea industry to increase production of tea of exportable quality during the current year. Tea Board is interacting with the Russian importers to expeditiously lift tea from India under Debt Repayment Route Protocol as agreed to between both the countries in December 1998.

In addition to the above government and the Tea Board have been analysing country-wise exports of tea giving special attention to areas offering potential. Tea Board also acts to remove bottlenecks in exports to individual markets whenever these are noticed. Certain other steps taken to increase exports of tea include:—

(i) participation in major trade fairs/exhibitions abroad;

(ii) field sampling at speciality stores and in principal markets;

(iii) media campaign to increase consumer awareness of the speciality of Indian teas and to popularise the Tea Board marketing symbol which stands for pure Indian tea;

(iv) exchange of tea delegations between India and tea importing countries.

Purchase of Rice for Export

1868. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MMTC floated tender around September, 1997 for sale of rice lying at Gandhidham, Kandla in Gujarat;

(b) whether it is also a fact that stock lying unsold for three years was purchased for export;

(c) what was the exact quantity purchased for export and at what rate per MT;

(d) what were the reasons for not exporting; and

(e) how much quantity was sold in domestic market and at what rate?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir; MMTC, however, floated the tender in Oct/Nov. 1997.

(b) Yes, the purchases were made against the export order received by MMTC.

(c) The quantity received on trust receipt is 32931.150 metric tonne. The purchase contract were finalised @Rs. 8340 per metric tonne of which part quantity of 5000 metric tonnes was finalised @ Rs. 8325 per metric tonne, FOB/Kandla basis.

(d) The reason for non-export was due to port congestion at Kandla and non-availability of appropriate vessels at that time. Subsequently, a quantity of approximately 10,863 metric tonnes was exported to Czech Republic.

(e) The quantity sold in domestic market is 18986 metric tonne @Rs. 6110 per metric tonne on as-is-where-is basis. Additionally, 222 metric tonne of sold quantity not lifted was later disposed off @ Rs. 2510 per metric tonne.

Import and export of gold

1869. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the Import of Gold, including those through personal baggage, during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) the export of Gold Jewellery during these years; and

(c) the estimated amount of gold consumed within the country during each year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The details of Import of Gold including those through personal baggage during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 were:—

Year	Qty. (in tonnes)
1996-97	338.19
1997-98	643.268
1998-99	521.731

(b) The exports of gold jewellery for the period mentioned at (a) above, were:

Year	Value in US $ (In Million)
1996-97	511.80
1997-98	572.30
1998-99	863.75

(c) As per information available, the estimated demand of gold in India during the above three financial years were 554 tonnes, 825 tonnes & 758 tonnes respectively, the bulk of which were met by imports and the rest by recycling, etc.

Export of soyameal

1870. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the companies which are exporters of soyameal at present;

(b) the details of their export performance during the last three years;

(c) whether Government have a proposal to make some changes in the procedure for exporting soyameal; and

(d) if so, by when and the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Export of oilmeals including soyameal is allowed freely. Company-wise details of exports are not maintained.

(b) The total quantity and value of exports of soyameal during the last three years and the current financial year (April-May, 99) is as under:

Year	Quantity (lakh MT)	Value (Rs. crores)
1996-97	29.82	2731.24
1997-98	28.72	2718.28
1998-99(Prov.)	31.34	1737.76
1999-2000 (Apr.-May 99, Prov.)	2.67	174.55

(SOURCE : DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Export from Export-oriented Units

†1871. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a constant increase in the export from export-oriented units in the country during the last few years;

(b) if so, the value of exports from these units during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is also a fact that these units have also made import during the said years; and

(d) if so, the value of import during each of the said years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The value of export is given below:

(Rs. in Crores)

Year	Export
1996-97	8731.27
1997-98	10278.51
1998-99	12500.00(P)

(P) Provisional.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, The value of import is given below:

(Rs. in Crores)

Year	Import
1996-97	2154.26
1997-98	2488.57
1998-99	3000.00(P)

(P) Provisional

Value of Export and Import

†1872. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount of export and import in the last three years;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange received from export;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the value of material exported from Rajasthan in the last three years; and

(d) what were the top five materials and the total amount of export made?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As per the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics data the value of India's exports and imports for the last three years in US $ terms are as under:—

(US $ Million)

Years	Exports	Imports
1996-97	33470	39132
1997-98	35006	41484
1998-99	33641*	41886*

*Provisional data.

(c) and (d) The Central Government does not maintain state-wise export data. As per the provisional DGCI&S data five major export sectors of India during 1998-99 were textiles (US $ 8411 million), gems and jewellery (US $ 5904 million), chemicals and related products (US $ 4180 million), agriculture and allied products (US $ 3952 million) and engineering goods (US $ 3804 million).

Industrial Growth Rate

1873. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current rate of industrial growth as compared to those during the last two years;

(b) whether the expected growth rate for the current year will be achieved; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) The overall indust-

rial growth rate in the current year as well as in the last two years are given in the table below:—

Year	Percentage growth rate
1997-98 (April-March)	6.6
1998-99 (April-March)	4.0
1998-99 (April-October)	3.4
1999-2000 (April-October)	6.9

(b) and (c) Government has not made any estimate of the expected industrial growth rate for the current year.

Danger to Indian Wheat, Apple and Edible Oil Trade

1874. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA:: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian wheat, apple and edible oil trade is in danger because of cheap import; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to tide over this problem?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The Export Import policy regarding agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes, earning foreign exchange and to augment domestic availability. Liberalisation of trade has led to the increased availability of commodities to the consumers, sometimes at prices that render domestic produce at a disadvantage. With effect from 1.12.99, an import duty of 50% on import of wheat has been imposed. As the review of the Export Import policy, especially relating to agricultural products, is a continuous process, policy interventions are made as and when deemed necessary, balancing the interests of farmers and consumers.

Patent for Indian Food

1875. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain countries have put their claim for patent before World Trade Organisation of some specific eatables of Indian food after Basmati Rice and Turmeric;

(b) if so, the names of those countries together with items claimed for patent; and

(c) the necessary steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) No information regarding claims for patent, world-wide, is maintained by the Government. However, patents are granted by respective governments under their patent laws.

(c) Whenever information is received about patents being taken on certain products which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether grant of patent can be challenged.

Infrastructure Facility in Moradabad

†1876. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government had given its consent to enhance infrastructure facility in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether an amount of Rs. 20 crores was to be given towards this in addition to partial amount made available by the Centre;

(c) whether State has already sanctioned its share of Rs. 12.28 crores for electricity;

(d) if so, by when the Central Government are going to release Rs. 12.00 crores towards roads and remaining amount of Rs. 8.00 crores; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hinid.

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Under the Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme the Central Govenment has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 008.00 crores as its share towards the System (Power) Improvement scheme at Moradabad. The total cost of the project is Rs. 20.28 crores. The Central Government has already released its share to the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

(c) The State Government of U.P. have informed that they have released the State's share of Rs. 12.28 crores for the project.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.

Rise in Export Growth Rate

1877. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any rise in India's export growth during October-November 1999;

(b) whether it has resulted in a lower trade deficit during April-Novemebr 1999, as compared to the same period of the previous year;

(c) if so, what was the growth percentage in October-November in dollar and rupee term;

(d) whether our import during April-November 1999 registered any higher growth rate as compared to previous year, particularly in oil import; and

(e) if so, what are the estimated figurs of import, both in terms of dollar and rupee during April-November, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As per the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics provisional data there is rise in India's export growth during October 1999. It has resulted in lower trade deficit during April-October, 1999 as compared to the same period of the previous year.

(c) The growth percentage in October, 1999 in exports is 21.65% in US $ terms and 24.85% in Rupee terms and in imports is 15.45% in US $ terms and 18.49% in Rupees terms.

(d) and (e) As per DGCI&S latest provisional data imports during April-October, 1999 are estimated at US $ 26552.71 million which is 7.53% higher than the level of US $ 24694.08 million during the same period last year. Oil imports during April-October, 1999 are valued at US $ 5276.53 million which is 52.04% higher than oil imports valued at US $ 3470.45 million in the corresponding period last year.

Sector-wise break-up of FDI

1878. SHRI GURU DAS GUPTA:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the sector-wise break-up of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) approvals, number of proposals and the amount of the project, and the actual investment made, year-wise, since the beginning of new economic reforms in the year 1991, till date?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): Sir, the details of sector-wise/year-wise break-up of FDI approved during the period from August, 1991 to August, 1999 are given in Annexure-I *[See* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 50]

Further, the details of sector-wise/yaer-wise inflows of FDI from 1.8.91 to 31.8.99 are given in Annexure-II [*See* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 50]

Project details are incorporated from time to time, in the Monthly SIA Newsletters brought out by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, which are widely circulated including the Library of the House.

Safeguarding India's Interest in WTO Conference

1879. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item in the Business Standard, dated 18th November, 1999 captioned "India faces isolation with regard to WTO Conference";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken to safeguard India's Interest in the Seattle Conference on WTO held in the end of November, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The inference in the newspaper article 'India faces isolation with regard to WTO Conference", does not appear to be based on an entirely correct appreciation of facts.

(c) Government's preparations to safeguard India's interest at the Seattle Ministerial Conference included building up of a national consensus on a proactive agenda through consultations with major stake holders. Intensive consultations were also undertaken with other developing countreis so as to evolve issue based support. India participated effectively in the deliberations of the Seattle Ministerial Conference. On many issues, India received the support of a number of developing countries at the meeting. We also effectively opposed the inclusion of non-trade issues, like labour standards, in the agenda of the WTO.

Special incentives under new Industrial Policy for NER

1880. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of notified special incentives under new Industrial Policy to attract investment in the North-East Region;

(b) the response so far received on the basis of such notification;

(c) whether it is a fact some unwilling industrial houses are putting pressure to undermine the special relief for the NE region to safeguard their own self-interest; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) The particulars of incentives under the new industrial policy for the North-East Region, *inter alia*, are:

1. Expenditure on each Growth Centre, upto Rs. 15 crores to be met through Central assistance.

2. Funding pattern for Integrated Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDCs) changed from 2:3 between Government of India and SIDBI to now 4:1. The Government of India funds would be in the nature of grant.

3. Transport subsidy scheme has been extended by 7 years upto 31.3.2007 and the amount is to be disbursed through North-Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited.

4. Industries located in the Growth Centres would be given capital investment subsiby at the rate of 15% of their investment in plant & machinery subject to a ceiling of Rs. 30 lakh.

5. Growth Centres & IIDCs become tax-free zones for income tax and excise duty for a period of 10 years. Certain high growth potential industries have also been given the tax-free status irrespective of the location in the North-East.

6. An interest subsidy of 3% on the working capital loans would be provided for a priod of ten years to the new units.

7. Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for new industrial units has been put in place.

8. The Prime Ministers Rozgar Yojna (PMRY) liberalized.

(b) The Government doesn't monitor industrial investment in response to specific policy package.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Not applicable in view of answer in (c) above.

Product Patents Legislation

1881. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new legislation to provide for product patents in India is on the anvil;

(b) if so, the cardinal features of the proposed legislation;

(c) whether Government are aware that the introduction of product patents would be detrimental to the Indian Industries vis-a-vis the Multi-national Companies;

(d) if so, the steps proposed to safeguard the farmers;

(e) whether the major political parties and the representative bodies of Indian Industries and Commerce would be consulted with regard to the provisions of the amended Product Patents Bill; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (f) In accordance with the obligations contained in the agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), India is required to amend the Patents Act, 1970 by 31 December, 1999 in respect of scope of patentable inventions, providing for exclusions from patentability, providing a uniform term of patent protection of 20 years, alignment of compulsory licensing provisions, etc. An additional period of five years, that is, till 31 December, 2004 is also available for extending product patent protection to areas of technology not protected so far. This would mainly be in the areas of pharmaceuticals and agricultural chemicals.

Government has maintained a close interface with individuals organisations and interest groups concerned and has also organised a series of Interactive Sessions on 'Approaches to the Indian Patent Law' in different cities of country between 28 June, 1999 to 9 August, 1999.

Factors affecting country's export

1882. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that poor infrastructure and procedural bottlenecks are some of the factors which adversely affected our country's exports; and

(b) if so, what are the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (b) Exports from India (in US $ terms) during the period April—October, 1999-2000 compared to corresponding period in 1998-99 have shown a growth of 10.02%. However, the Government has been receiving representations from various trade bodies on the infrastructure constraints and need for

procedural simplifications and has taken steps to remove such constraints.

It is the endeavour of the Government to take concerted measures to remove infrastructure constraints at ports, airports and other handling points. Various measures have been taken to simplify the procedures related to movement of cargo, reduce the dwell time, rationalise handling costs and bring greater efficiency at ports/ airports and other handling points. Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and Container Freight Stations (CFSs) are being established in various parts of the country to facilitate container transportation of goods and intermodal conveyance. Private initiative is being harnessed in creating infrastructure at ports, airports, in upgrading highway and in setting up of ICDs/CFSs, warehouses, etc.

Special attention has also been accorded to implement the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) at Ports/Airports/ICDs to cut down multiplicity of documents. The Department of Revenue has taken measures to facilitate faster movement and clearance of goods. Important measures, inter-alia, include simplification of transhipment rules, coastal shipping, bonded trucking, rational measures for speedy clearance of export-import goods and extended coverage of different export related schemes at various ports of registration.

Use of expertise in knowledge based industries

1883. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India can use its expertise in knowldge-based industries to become a top trading partner of the West in the new millennium, cancelling out the advantage which China gained in the closing Century with its manufacturing strength, as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated 2nd December, 1999; and

(b) in what manner India can be the services hub of the world and also be the Central place from which knowledge industries can generate and flourish, like China; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) India has the advantage of vast pool of skilled and technically trained man-power for promoting

export of skill based and knowledge based services. The country has shown its potential in software sector which has great scope for expansion; pharmaceuticals is another sector of great potential. Recognising the importance of services. Services export was included in the Exim Policy to provide this sector the needed boost. Policy measures are continuously being taken to encourage the services sector as well as the knowledge based industries so that they are able to contribute substantially to the growth of services exports.

Industrialisation of backward areas of Goa

1884. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Meta Strips Limited is setting up a big factory at Industrial Estate, Cortalim and Sancoale Village, Goa, with active support of Government financial institutions;

(b) whether the unit will help in industrialisation of backward areas of Goa in a big way since industry is a self-generating economy;

(c) whether some local organisations are protesting against setting up of this unit on false pretext of pollution; and

(d) if so, what steps Government are taking to ensure that industrialisation is not hampered there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected from the State Government and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export of Flowers and Fruits

1885. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have proposal to increase the export of flowers and fruits to different countries;

(b) if so, the countries to which flowers and fruits are being exported at present and the total amount of foreign exchange earned by Government by exporting flowers and fruits during the last three years;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to increase the export of flowers and fruits in the coming years; and

(d) if so, the plan drawn in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) The Government has been taking various measures constantly to boost exports of horticulture products including flowers and fruits to various export markets. Some of the measures taken by the Government to increase exports of horticulture products and floriculture products include the following:—

(i) Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion; supply of minikits, improving productivity and training of farmers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development of Tropical, Temperate and Arid Zone fruits;

(ii) Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;

(iii) Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/ Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transports units, establishment of pre cooling/cold storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handling systems (pack houses);

(iv) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, and strengthening of quality control including installation of latest ISO 9000/HACCP equipments at export units;

(v) Grant of air freight subsidy on export of selected floriculture products and fresh fruits.

(vi) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially mangoes in overseas markets. Research efforts are on for the use of modern technologies such as Controlled/Modified

Atmosphere technologies in transportation for increasing of shelf-life of perishable products such as mangoes and lychees;

(vii) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(viii) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits, vegetables and floriculture products;

(ix) Providing technical advisory services and other support services to, trade and industry including training of farmers for export production, quality control packaging transport, etc.

Flowers and fruits are being exported presently to Middle East countries, Europe and South East Asia including Japan, Russia and USA. The total foreign exchange earned through the export of flowers and fruits during the last three years have been as follows:

Year	Value (Rs. crores)
1996-97	304.17
1997-98	350.19
1998-99*	357.26

*Proovisional SOURCE: DGCI&S/APEDA

PSUs in Andhra Pradesh

1886. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Central Public Sector Undertakings/Units in Andhra Pradesh, district-wise;

(b) the number of PSUs making profit/loss separately in 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, unit-wise;

(c) the reasons for their sickness, if any;

(d) the total number of workers in the sick PSUs, unit-wise; and

(e) the steps Government have taken or propose to take for the revival of sick PSUs, unit-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) There are 12 Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) which have their registered offices in Andhra Pradesh. District-wise information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) During the last three years i.e. 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98, till which period the information is available, the number of PSUs making profits in Adndhra Pradesh were 9, 9 and 7 respectively and those incurring losses were 3, 3 and 5 respectively.

Reasons for sickness are enterprise specific. However, some of the common reasons for sickness are obsolete plant & machinery, out dated tecchnology, low capacity utilisation, excess manpower, resources crunch, heavy interest burden etc.

(d) The number of employees in three sick PSUs in Andhra Pradesh viz. (i) Hindustan Fluorocarbons Ltd. (HFL), (ii) Praga Tools Ltd. (PTl) and (iii) Southern Pesticides Corporation Ltd. (SPCL) as on 31.3.98 were 247, 1635 and 248 respectively.

(e) BIFR has sanctioned revival schemes for HFL and SPCL. The schemes are at different stages of implementation. HFL has been earning profits for the last three years. PTL was referred to BIFR in 1998 and is at enquiry stage. However, Government have approved restructuring plan for PTL which is with BIFR for decision.

Profits and losses of PSUs

†1887. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PSUs suffered loss during the year 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 and the number of PSUs earned profit during the same period, alongwith total amount of profit and loss separately, year-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the names of first ten PSUs which earned net profit during the year 1998-99, alongwith which suffered loss during the same period and what was the amount of profit and loss, Undertaking-wise; and

(c) the measures being taken to protect these loss suffering Undertakings, together with names of PSUs proposed to be given to private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) During 1996-97 and 1997-98, till which period the information is available, the number of PSUs making profit/loss alongwith the total amount of profit and loss separately, year-wise is given in Table No. 1.7 of the Overview of Volume I of the Public Enterprises Survey, 1997-98 which was laid in both the Houses of Parliament on 26.2.99 and is published document.

The names of the first ten profit making PSUs and top ten loss incurring PSUs alongwith the amount of profit/loss, during 1997-98 are given in Table 1.16 and Table 1.17 of the Overview of Volume I of Public Enterprises Survey, 1997-98.

(c) The measures being taken to protect the loss suffering undertakings are enterprises specific. However, some of the common measures are periodical reviews by administrative ministries/ Departments, technology upgradation, diversification and change in product mix, financial and business restructuring, reationalisation of manpower, modernisation of plants, inventory and cost control, improved marketing strategies etc. It is the policy of the Government to progressively disinvest its equity in non-strategic PSEs, duly taking measures to safeguard the interest of the workers.

Latest Guidelines for Sick PSUs

1888. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the latest guidelines of Government regarding sick PSUs, both State and Central;

(b) the list of Central and State Sector sick PSUs indicating proposed status of employees in the PSUs in Assam and the number

of PSUs which have either been referred to BIFR or a revival package is under consideration;

(c) the action contemplated for those where revival package is untenable;

(d) whether Government have plan to merge few PSUs operating in the NER to have an effective regional action plan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) The Central Government is concerned with Central PSUs only. No centralised data is maintained in regard to State PSUs. The strategy of the Government on PSUs has been enunciated in the budget speech 1999-2000. Government will continue to devise viable rehabilitation strategies for weak units.

(b) and (c) There are four operating Central PSUs in the State of Assam as on 31.3.98, of which one PSU, namely, North Eastern Regional Agri. Marketing Corpn. Ltd. (NERAMAC) is a sick unit that has been refered to BIFR. Government have approved restructuring plan for NERAMAC, which is now with BIFR.

(d) and (e) There is as of now no specific plan with the Government.

Revival of PSEs

1889. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PSEs recommended for revival and the number of PSEs recommended for winding up during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of Public Sector Enterprises running in loss and referred to BIFR;

(c) the profit making PSEs; and

(d) the efforts made to revive all sick PSEs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) As on 30.6.99, 67 sick PSUs were registered

with the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR). During last 3 years, i.e. 1997, 1998 and 1999 (upto June) upto which period information is available, BIFR had sanctioned revival scheme for four PSUs in 1997 and for one PSU each in 1998 & 1999. Winding up was recommended for only one PSU in 1997.

(b) and (c) As on 31.3.1998, there were 134 profit making PSUs and 100 loss making PSUs. As on 30th June 1999, the period upto which information is available, 67 PSUs were registered with BIFR.

(d) Enterprise specific measures are taken for halting sickness and for improving the performance of the PSUs. BIFR is formulating appropriate revival and rehabilitation schemes under the Provisions of Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 for the sick PSUs registered with it. The measures adopted include business and financial restructuring, conversion of an enterprise into a joint venture, rationalisation of manpower, technology upgradation, diversification, modernisation of plant and machinery etc.

Leasehold properties of Jessop & Co. Ltd.

1890. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of leasehold properties of Jessop & Co. Ltd;

(b) whether some of the leasehold properties have gone out of control of M/s. Jessop & Co. Ltd. during the last two years; and

(c) if so, the details of the same, along with reason of dispossession?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRIESES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) The details of leasehold properties of M/s Jessop & Co. Limited are as hereunder:—

Property Details	Land area in Acres
(i) Durgapur Factory (lease with Govt of West Bengal)	117.875

Property Details	Land area in Acres
(ii) Railway siding at Durgapur	2.41
(iii) Durgapur Quarters for Officials	4.71

(b) and (c) Leasehold properties stated above have not gone out of control of M/s Jessop & Co. Ltd. during the last 2 years.

Industrialisation in NER

1891. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of heavy industries set up in the North-East Region with names of States;

(b) whether there is any plan for further setting up of heavy industries in the North Eastern States during the Ninth Plan; and

(c) if so,the amount earmarked, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) The number of PSUs set up in the North-East Region (NER) is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) and (c) The industrial units in the Central Sector are not planned State-wise. These projects are formulated by the Government and their location is decided based upon techno-economic considerations like availability of raw materials, infrastructure including power, roads, communication etc. and proximity to the market. Further, in the present liberalised economic environment, Industrial Sector stands largely delicensed and private sector is, therefore, free to decide making investment in industries anywhere in the country including in the North-East Region.

Statement

Number of PSUs Set up in North-East Region (State-wise)

ASSAM

1. Assam Ashok Hotel Corporation Ltd.
2. Bongaigaon Refinery and Petro-chemicals Ltd.

3. North Eastern regional Agri. Marketing Corporation Ltd.
4. Numaligarh Refinery Ltd.
5. Oil India Ltd.

MANIPUR

1. Manipur State Drug & Pharmaceutical Ltd.

MEGHALAYA

1. North Eastern Handicrafts & Handloom Dev. Corporation Ltd.
2. North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.

NAGALAND

1. Nagaland Pulp & Paper Co. Ltd.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

1. Donyi Polo Ashok Hotel Ltd.

Closure of MAMC and BOGL

1892. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be please to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he had made a statement in Rajkot on 18th October, 1999 stating that Government have decided to close down eight public sector industries, including MAMC, BOGL in Durgapur, West Bengal;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the previous Government had constituted an Expert Committee to consider the revival of those plants;

(d) if so, whether the Committee has finalised their recommendations; and

(e) what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) Government had taken a decision to introduce Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS) by extending benefits of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to the employees of 10 unviable Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the Department of Heavy Industry including MAMC & BOGL. BIFR/Disinvestment

Commission at one stage or the other had reached a preliminary/final view regarding winding up or discontinuance of operations in case of these sick PSUs.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. An Expert group was set up to explore the possibilities of revival of some of these PSUs where Voluntary Separation Scheme was introduced. The Expert Group has submitted its report in respect of sick PSUs referred to it. Government is to take a decision on these recommendations and communicate these to BIFR/High Court as the case may be.

Implementation of sanctioned scheme by BIFR

1893. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be please to state:

(a) the status of implementation of sanctioned schemes by BIFR with respect of (i) Jessop, (ii) Braithwaite, (iii) Bharat Brakes & Valves, (iv) Burn Standard and (v) Reyrolle Burn Standard PSUs; and

(b) the action taken by Government to ensure smooth implementation of the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) Government of India have extended the reliefs/concessions required for the implementation of the BIFR sanctioned revival package of (i) Jessop, (ii) Braithwaite, (iii) Bharat Brakes & Valves, (iv) Burn Standard, and (v) RBL (formerly known as Reyrolle Burn Limited). As regards the reliefs/concessions envisaged from the other agencies, the same have either already been extended or have been agreed to 'in principle' by the agencies concerned and suitable action is already under process. Government of India periodically review the status of implementation of the revival schemes in respect of these companies.

Revival of sick PSUs

1894. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be please to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of PSUs in his Ministry are either chronically sick or are on the verge of sickness;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that many are facing the risk of being closed down;

(c) how many have been identified for being converted into joint venture and what is the progress made, so far; and

(d) what steps are being taken to revive the remaining sick industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) Out of 48 operating PSUs under the administrative control of the Department of Heavy Industry, 16 PSUs made profit and 32 made losses in 1998-99. 26 PSUs are sick and referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR).

(c) Government have given 'in principle' approval for conversion of 24 PSUs under the administrative control of the Department of Heavy Industry into Joint Venture companies with offer of equity upto 74% to the joint venture partner. Consultants/Merchant Bankers have been appointed in the case of 18 PSUs for cating Joint Venture Partners. The Belting Division of Andrew Yule & Company Limited has been converted into a Joint Venture Company.

(d) Revival plans have been sanctioned by BIFR in case of 12 PSUs involving fresh infusion of funds to the extent of Rs. 616 crore and financial restructuring of Rs. 2063 crore. An Expert Group has been constituted by the Government to examine the possibility of revival of some of the sick PSUs where Voluntary Separation Scheme was introduced. The Group has submitted its report. Government is to take a decision on these recommendations and communicate these to BIFR/High Court as the case may be.

Setting up of disinvestment fund

1895. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be please to state:

(a) whether Disinvestment Commission had recommended setting up of a Disinvestment Fund;

(b) if so, whether the fund has been set up and if so, its scope and objectives;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Commission had also recommended delinking of disinvestment process from the budgetary exercise of Government;

(e) whether the same has been accepted; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) to (f) The Disinvestment Commission has outlined the advantage of separating disinvestment proceeds from the other non-debt capital receipts in the budget. Government have decided in principle to establish a disinvestment fund.

Exit policy for unviable public enterprises

1896. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be please to state:

(a) whether Government have any exit policy for heavy loss making and unviable public enterprises;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what is the plan for their revival?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) to (d) There is no exit policy as such. Government have formulated a Voluntary Retirement Scheme in

respect of the work force. In the case of 10 heavy loss making public enterprises (PSEs) a scheme of voluntary separation scheme conforming to the VRS model has been implemented by the Department of Heavy industries. Sick companies are referred to the BIFR for revival. Revival package are sought to be implemented in accordance with BIFR's plans. These include restructuring, write offs, conversion of loans into equity, fresh infusion of capital etc.

Use of Disinvestment Fund

1897. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to spend a part of the money collected through the disinvestment of Public Sector Enterprises on making the viable PSE's stronger; and

(b) if so, the viable rehabilitation programmes devised for weak units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) The proceeds of disinvestment of Government equity in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are credited into the Consolidated Fund of India. Government provides Plan & non-Plan budgetary support to PSUs in relation to assessed needs.

Financial Sector Reforms

1898. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has urged Government to take up reforms in the pension sector in tandem with insurance sector reforms to strengthen the overall financial sector reforms; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to the above demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) As part of the

financial sector reforms, the pension sector is also being opened for private competition.

High/Low Power Transmitters installed in Andhra Pradesh

1899. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of High Power Transmitters, Low Power Transmitters and Very Low Power Transmitters installed in Andhra Pradesh during the last two years;

(b) whether all the transmitters are functioning satisfactorily;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and remedial action taken by Government; and

(d) the number of such transmitters proposed to be installed in Andhra Pradesh during the Ninth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) One High Power Transmitter, seven Low Power transmitters, and one Very Low Power Transmitter have been commissioned during the last two years in Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Three High Power Transmitters, eighteen Low Power Transmitters and three Very Low Power Transmitters.

Air Programmes in Remote Areas of Border

†1900. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the programmes of All India Radio are being heard in remote areas of Indo-Burma and Indo-Bangladesh borders; and

(b) if not, what steps have been taken by Government to ensure that the programmes of All India Radio are heard in Chalna district council area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

JAITLEY): (a) The programmes of All India Radio cover remote areas of Indo-Bangladesh border and parts of Indo-Burma border.

(b) Does not arise.

Promotions in Prasar Bharati

†1901. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has sought advice from the Department of Law in connection with the promotion of personnel not connected with programme service cadre of Prasar Bharati; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Incentives to Electronic Harmonium Artists

1902. DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3032 given in the Rajya Sabha on 14th July, 1998 and state:

(a) the number of applications received by AIR from modern harmonium players in Carnatic music and how many of them were allowed solo performance during the last two years;

(b) the steps being taken by Government to attract more electronic harmonium artists and the incentives being provided to them in this regard; and

(c) whether Government have prepared any panel of harmonium players?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati have informed that Audition of Harmonium Players in Hindustani and Carnatic music started in

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1996 and since then only nine applications have been received from Harmonium Players in Carnatic music for audition. Solo performance in All India Radio is allowed only to those artists with "A" Grade or above and since there is no "A" Grade artist in Harmonium, no Solo performance has been allowed. All India Radio have also clarified that there is no instrument called modern/electronic Harmonium. With a view to attract the talents, the payment to artists of electronic effect instruments like keyboard, synthesiser etc. has been recently revised.

(c) No, Sir.

Retirement of Members from Prasar Bharati Board

1903. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the guidelines followed for retiring one-third members of Prasar Bharati Board after every two years;

(b) whether the guidelines were followed while retiring the two members whose names were announced recently; and

(c) the criteria followed for selection of new members of the Board?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) On the advice of Attorney General, following criteria were taken into consideration while curtailing the term of office of some of the part-time Members in order to retire one-third of them every second year:—

(i) the experience, expertise and background of the Members;

(ii) their contribution to the effective and harmonious working of the Board;

(iii) relative indispensability of part-time Members at the present stage and the necessity of taking the benefit of their services by their retention for a further period of time; and

(iv) all other relevant circumstances.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As provided under section 4(1) of the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990, the part-time Members are to be appointed on the recommendation of a Committee, consisting of Chairman, Council of States, Chairman, Press Council of India and a nominee of the President. As per section 4(3) of the Act, the part-time members shall be persons of eminence in public life.

Doordarshan and Air Stations in New Districts of M.P.

†1904. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the newly formed districts of Madhya Pradesh where the Doordarshan and AIR stations have not been set up;

(b) whether any scheme regarding setting up of the same in these district headquarters is under consideration;

(c) if so, by when these would be set up; and

(d) whether any demand has been made by the State Government in this regard, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) The network planning of AIR & Doordarshan is done with a view to cover a target area and not to set up Doordarshan/AIR kendra in each and every district in the States. All the districts of Madhya Pradesh including the newly created districts are covered partially or fully by a local or neighbouring transmitter. Six newly created district of Badwani, Kawardha, Dhamtari, Mahasamund, Dindori and Umaria are without a TV/AIR transmitter.

(b) and (c) Following schemes are under implementation: (i) One LPT each at Badwani and Sindhwa in Badwani district and (ii) One LPT at Pandaria in Kawardha district. These projects will be completed within the next financial year. There is no proposal for setting up new radio stations at any of these districts.

(d) No, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Functioning of Song and Drama Division in Srinagar

1905. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the office of Song and Drama Division located at Residency Road in Srinagar had stopped functioning as most of the staff had been posted away due to abnormal conditions there;

(b) the steps Government are taking to restore its normal functioning;

(c) whether it is also a fact that for day-to-day (sanction of funds the office has to approach the counterpart office in Ludhiana; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The song and Drama Division office is functional.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Mobilizing People through Electronic Media

1906. DR. (SHRIMATI) JOYASREE GOSWAMI MAHANTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any policy of mobilizing the people in the country by making best use of electronic media, like television, for creating a sense of unity amongst them and thereby ushering an era of lasting peace in the country;

(b) if so, whether there is any specific policy for Assam and North-Eastern Region in view of the extremist activities and secessionist movement presently going on there; and

(c) what are the details thereof and what concrete steps have been taken in this direction during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Prasar Bharati, as a public service broadcaster, has a role to foster peace, and amity among people of diverse cultures, religions and faiths. In this direction, it mounts various programmes with a view to promote peace and harmony and National Integration. Over the years, Doordarshan and All India Radio have played a major role in transforming the country from backwardness to unified and progressive state.

(b) and (c) In view of the extremists' activities and secessionist movements going on in Assam and some North Eastern states, there is a specific policy to mount programmes on the problems of militancy, insurgency, unrest arising out of foreigners' issues, under employment and under development, sense of alienation and the activities of disruptive forces with special emphasis on the need for peace and harmony. "North east in Seige" (Insurgency in NE), "The Silent Invasion" (Infiltration issues), "Future at Stake" (Misguided Youth), "Alone in Agony" (Aftermath of Militancy), "ULFA: The Terror in Brahmaputra Valley", "Breaching the Waves" (Insurgency in Manipur) are some of the programmes, which have been telecast in the recent past on the problems of extremists activities and secessionist movement in North Eastern Region.

Transmission Network of Akashvani in Border Areas

†1907. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to further strengthen the transmission network of Akashvani in the border areas with the intention of enhancing the number of listeners;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount likely to be spent on this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c): Yes, Sir. 41 schemes of All India Radio are being implemented at a cost of Rs. 112 crores in order to strengthen

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

transmission network in border areas. The details are given in the Annexure. [*See* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 51]

Corruption in Doordarshan

1908. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the rampant corruption in deciding the programmes of Doordarshan Channels;

(b) if so, the reasons and remedies therefor; and

(c) how does Government plan to make transmission of Doordarshan programmes with better clarity in pictures and better sound?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Some complaints of corruption have come to the notice of the Government and all such complaints are examined thoroughly. Also, the areas of activities of Doordarshan prone to corruption have been identified and orders have been issued streamlining the procedures involved in processing the serials/programmes/events etc.

(c) Doordarshan, every year, depending upon availability of resources, take up schemes for renewal, replacement and modernisation of equipments in order to improve quality of signals for better reception by the viewers.

Proposal for Sanskrit Programmes on Doordarshan

1909. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Doordarshan has taken any initiative to promote the Sanskrit language in its Millennium programming for the coming years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the proposals for Sanskrit programmes received by Doordarshan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati have intimated that due consideration has been given to promote Sanskrit language in Millennium programme schedule of Doordarshan. In this regard, two proposals for programmes on Sanskrit have also been received. In the 24 hour Millennium Show on 31st December, 1999, there will be some segments of Sanskrit shlokas. Films like 'Kalchkra' and 'The Indian Mind' will also dwell on the Sanskrit language.

Rules/Procedures for Promotion in Subordinate Offices

†1910. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:
SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are some procedures/rules for promotion in subordinate offices of the Ministry, alongwith the details thereof;

(b) whether these procedures/rules are properly implemented; and

(c) if so, the reasons for promoting other officials neglecting the employees of Prasar Bharati subordinate programme service cadre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Promotions to various posts in the subordinate offices of this Ministry are made on the basis of recruitment rules prescribed for the posts and on the basis of instructions issued by DOP&T and UPSC from time to time. These instructions are strictly followed while making promotions.

(c) No such case has been reported.

Doordarshan Channels on National Network

1911. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Doordarshan channels on national network;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the coverage of each channel; and

(c) the number of channels in operation for N.R.Is?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) Doordarshan operates two terrestrial networks viz. DD-I and DD-II. The terrestrial reach of DD-I is 74.8% of the Geographical area and 87.9% of the population in India. The DD-II service is presently available in approximately sixty cities and adjoining areas. Doordarshan also operates eleven regional language channels, one Sports channel and one News channel which can be received through dish antenna/cable network throughout the country. There is one exclusive satellite channel tagetted for viewers outside India.

Termination of Services of Prasar Bharati Board Members

1912. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently terminated the services of two Prasar Bharati Board members;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and

(c) whether it is not a fact that by doing so Government are trying to dispense with plurality of views, the essential sprit of Prasar Bharati?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) Sub-section 3 of Section 6 of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990 provides that term of office of part-time Members shall be six years but one-third of such Members shall retire on the expiration of every second year. Sub-section 5 of Section 6 empowers the President to make such provisions as he thinks fit for curtailing the term of office of some of

the part-time Members in order that one-third of them shall retire every second year. In order to meet the legal requirement of these provisions term of office of two part-time Members, namely, Prof. U.R. Rao and Dr. Abid Hussain has been curtailed from 6 years to 4 years. The term of office of another two part-time Members namely Prof. Romila Thapar and Shri Rajendra Yadav has been curtailed from 6 years to 2 years. This, in no way, affects the plurality of views which Prasar Bharati is expected to project as a broadcaster.

Setting up of Independent Broadcasting Authority

†1913. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Independent broadcast authority" published in the Daily Observer, dated 18th November, 1999;

(b) whether it is a fact that a problem is being created in India by various private broadcasting media;

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(d) whether Government contemplate setting up of an independent broadcasting authority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To deal all these issues a Broadcast law is under consideration.

(d) Yes, Sir.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Vulgar Programmes on Doordarshan

† 914. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that superstitious, violent and vulgar love scenes are being telecast for various reasons by the electronic media in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these telecasts are making impact on innocent children and immature adults;

(c) if so, Government's reaction in this regard; and

(d) the action being taken by Government to ban such telecasts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (d) Doordarshan and AIR's programmes are previewed before telecast/broadcast to ensure their complaince with the Programme Code, which, inter-alia, lays down that any excessive violence or vulgarity and superstitions, which may have adverse effect on the viewers should not be telecasted/broadcasted. Action on complaints about content of private channels, being retransmitted through cable networks, can be taken by authorised/specified officers notified by State Government/UTs under the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995.

In exceptional cases, Government of India also takes action as has been done in the case of Channel TB-6 whereby its transmission has been prohibited through cable networks as its programmes contain obscene matters affecting public morality.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Working of Doordarshan Relay Centres in Rajasthan

†1915. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prasar Bharati has reviewed the programmes and if so, the target and achievement of Doordarshan and Relay Centres located in Rajasthan;

(b) whether the centres have followed the guidelines properly, if not, what action is proposed to be taken;

(c) whether the Doordarshan Relay Centres in Rajasthan along the border area of Pakistan viz. Ramgarh (Jaisalmer), Chauhtan (Badmer) have started telecasting in full swing;

(d) if so, since when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) The programming and the functioning of all Doordarshan centres including Rajasthan are reviewed and monitored periodically by Prasar Bharati. Relay centres only relay the programmes of the main kendra and do not originate their own programmes. Due to non-availability of staff, 17 relay centres out of the total 80 such centres, in Rajasthan are given only partial transmission.

(c) to (e) The present status in respect of each of the transmitters is as under:

(i) Ramgarh (Jaisalmer): The transmitter is relaying transmission on full power since March, 1997.

(ii) Chauhtan (not Chuhran) (Barmer): The 10 KW high power transmitter is under implementation and is expected to be commissioned in about 2 years time. The project has been delayed mainly due to delay in completion of approach road and erection of 300 metre tower by the Implementing Agencies, However, the 1 KW interim set-up has been commissioned in March, 1997 and is relaying full time telecast since April, 1998.

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

Welfare Schemes for backwards in M.P.

†1916. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount spent on the welfare schemes relating to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/widows/handicapped and minorities during the last three years in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the backward and the most backward classes under welfare schemes;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the numbner of persons and families benefited during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Post-Matric Scholarships to Tribal Students in M.P.

†1917. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount provided by the Central Government to the Madhya Pradesh Government for extending the post-matric scholarship and stipend to the tribal students during each of the last five years;

(b) the amount utilized by the State Government during each of the said years;

(c) the amount which has been sanctioned for the students of Government and private institutions; and

(d) the established rules for sanctioning scholarships and stipends?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Details of Central Assistance provided by

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Government of India and utilised by Govt. of Madhya Pradesh towards Scheduled Tribes during the last five years under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship to SC and ST students are given below:—

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Central Assistance Released	Utilised
1994-95	407.23	353.93
1995-96	597.39	454.39
1996-97	973.62	973.18
1997-98	Nil	Nil
1998-99	Nil	Nil

(c) Information furnished above includes amount sanctioned by Govt. of India under the scheme towards Scholarship to the eligible students whether studying in Government or private institutions.

(d) All students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes pursuing recognized post matricultation courses in recognized institutions are eligible for the Scholarship under the Scheme subject to the following Means Test:

(a) In case of students whose parents'/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 38,220/- per annum	Full maintenance allowance and full fee.
(b) In case of students whose parents'/ guardians' income from all sources exceeds Rs. 38,220/- per annum but does not exceeds Rs. 50,920/- per annum and who pursue:	
(i) courses in Group* 'A'	Full maintenance allowance and full fee.
(ii) courses in Group* 'B', 'C', 'D' and 'E'	Half maintenance allowance and full fee.
(c) In the case of students, whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources exceeds Rs. 50,920/- per annum	No scholarship

NOTE: * Brief details of courses covered in Group "A" to "E"

Groups	Courses in brief
'A'	Degree and Post Graduation level courses in Medical (including B.A. M & S. etc). Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Fisheries etc.
'B'	Diploma level courses in Medical, Engg. etc. Commercial Pilot Licence course, Degree and Post Graduation levels courses in Business Admn. Science subjects etc.
'C'	Centificate courses in Engg/Techology etc. Diploma courses in Agriculture, Pharmacy, Veterinary Science, Fisheries, Dairy Development etc. Post-Gradute courses in Arts and Commerce subjects.
'D'	General courses upto Graduate level (2nd year and onwards)
'E'	Classes XI and XII in 10+2 system, Intermediate courses and first year of general courses upto graduate level.

SC status to 'Navshudra' Caste in Uttar Pradesh

1918. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to refer to reply to Unstrarred Question No. 3942 given in the Rajya Sabha on 12th May, 1997 and state:

(a) the reasons for postponing the matter of granting Scheduled Caste status to "Navshudra" the caste from East Bengal settled in Uttar Pradesh after partition; and

(b) by when this Caste will attain the status of Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) The matter is being examined in consultation with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Registrar General of India in the light of modalities approved by the Government on

15.06.1999. No time can be specified as proposals are received from time to time and processed in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

Pitiable condition of Elderly people in Himachal Pradesh

1919. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to observe the 1999 and 2000 as the years of elderly people;

(b) if so, the steps taken and schemes introduced to ameliorate the pitiable condition of this section of society in the State of Himachal Pradesh from which most of the youths are serving in Army;

(c) whether Government propose to set up a National Commission for Old People; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTIC AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The year 1999 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year for Older Persons while the National Policy on Older persons, announced by the Government, mentions that the year 2000 will be declared as the National Year for Older Persons.

(a) To observe the year 1999 as International Year of Older Persons, the Government announced the National Policy on Older Persons in January, 1999. A National Council for Older Persons has since been set up to operationalise the National Policy. Several initiatives/measures have been taken in pursuance of the National Policy. All State Governments including the State Government of Himachal Pradesh have been requested to chalk out an Action Plan for welfare of older persons, as envisaged in the Policy.

Besides, the Ministry had reviewed and revised its two on going schemes for welfare of older persons in light of the National Policy on Older Persons and these are now called as: (i) An Integrated Programme for Older Persons and (ii) Scheme of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Voluntary Organisations/Self Help Groups for Construction of Old Age Home/Multi Service Centres for

Older Persons. Under the scheme of 'An Integrated Programme for Older Persons', financial assistance is provided to voluntary organisations for establishing and maintaining Old Age Homes, Day Care Centres and Mobile Medicare Units etc. The other scheme mentioned above aims at providing one time financial grant for construction of old age homes or multi-service centres. Under the scheme mentioned at (i) above, financial assistance is being given to a voluntary organiation in Himachal Pradesh for running a Day Care Centre and a Mobile Medicare Unit for Older Persons.

(c) and (d) No, Sir, However, a National Council for Older Persons has already been established under the Chairmanship of the Minster of State for Social Justice and Empowermnet to operationalize the National Policy on Older Persons.

Abolition of Devdasi Tradition

†1920. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Devdasi tradition which is continuously prevailing in the Indian society since long has become synonymous with flesh trade;

(b) the names of the States where this evil practice is prevalent;

(c) whether poverty, starvation, unemployment and illiteracy are the root cause of this tradition; and

(e) if so, the role of Government in protecting the human rights and abolishing this evil tradition which has continued to exist in the name of religion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) The Devdasi system which was prevalent in some parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtara has been legally banned. Despite this, there are some reports that dedication in the name of God still continues, clandestinely, on a smaller scale. In earlier times when social bonds and practices were stronger, the system found its own means of sustaining such dedicated

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

women, but in recent times, there have been complaints that such dedicated women also indulge in prostitution to sustain themselves.

(c) and (d) The customary practice of dedication has been the phyenomenon of poverty particularly amoung the Scheduled Castes and backward classes to some extent. Lack of literacy and of control or access over productive resource (economic) has enfeebled such families and they continue to dedicate girls.

(e) The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharasthra have enacted laws for the prohibition of Devdasi system. The commercial aspect of this practice attracts provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. This supplements the substantive laws against Kidnepping, sale, abduction and wrongful detention of women and girls. Besides, these State Governments have initiated various economic rehabilitation measures.

15-Point Programme for Minorities in M.P.

† 1921. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken or propose to take any action for strengthening the 15-point programme for the welfare of minorities in Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details of action taken by Government to implement the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The 15-Point Programme for the welfare of minorities in the country including minorities in Madhya Pradesh, is under revision.

(b) The implementation of the programme is done by the State Government/Union Territory Administrations and is closely monitored by the Central Government on the basis of the half yearly progress reports received from the State/UTs.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Implementation of Juvenile Justice Act, 1986

1922. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether at two-day National Seminar held in New Delhi in April this year, Government's attention was drawn to the woefully inadequate implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 and the need to humanise the Juvenile Justice system;

(b) whether any review of the working of the system re-enacted in 1986, has been made; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof and the steps taken/being to provide a human face?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) Yes, Madam. The Government has been seized of inadequacies of the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 and the need to humanise the Juvenil Justice system much before the national seminar on the subject was held. With a view to strengthening the implementation of the Act in the Country and bringing about a qualitative improvement in the services provided, the Ministry's scheme for prevention and control of Juvenile social maladjustment was reviewed and renamed as "A" Programme for Juvenile Justice.

The Government is already considering amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 with a view to humanise the whole juvenile justice system.

Educational Centres for Tribal Women in Assam

1923. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether grants are being given to the voluntary organizations running educational centres for tribal women in the hilly areas of Assam;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Representation of SC/ST Women in Judiciary

†1924. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that representation of women belonging to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe is almost negligible in the Judiciary; and

(b) if so, whether Government will take steps to give reservation to these categories atleast in district courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts is made under Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution of India which do not provide for reservation for any class of persons.

(b) As per Articles 233, 234 and 235 of the Constitution of India, the matter relating to appointment, promotion and posting of persons in District and Subordinate Judiciary are within the purview of the respective State Governments and High Courts.

Employment of Disabled in Private Sector

1925. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private sector is under no obligation legally to provide employment to the disabled;

(b) if so, whether there is a proposal for doing so;

(c) whether the publications to educate disabled on the benefit etc. available to them are published in English only; and

(d) if so, whether it would be done in other languages also?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, only the appropriate Governments are required to make reservation of jobs in Government establishments.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Ministry has brought out publications in English and Hindi languages, containing details of all the schemes/services being offered to the disabled persons by States/Union Territory Administrations and the Central Government. State Governments/U.T. Administrations have also been requested to bring out publications in relevant local languages.

Objective of NSK Commission

1926. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the objective for which the National Safai Karamchari Commission has been set up;

(b) whether Government have ever assessed its performance in the light of its objective, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) by when the present term of the Commission is due to expire; and

(d) whether Government have formed any view on extension or otherwise of its term, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The basic objective for which the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis was set up is to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of Safai Karamcharis. The National Commission has, inter-alia, been empowered to investigate specific grievances and take suo moto notice on matters relating to non implementation of (a) programmes and schemes in respect of any group of Safai Karamcharis (b) decisions, guidelines or instructions

aimed at mitigating the hardship of Safai Karamcharis (c) measures for social and economic upliftment of Safai Karamcharis, and (d) the provisions of any law in its application to Safai Karamcharis and take up such matters with the concerned authorities. The Act also empowers the National Commission to call for any information with respect to any matters specified above from the concerned authorities.

(b) Under the provisions of National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993, the Commission is required to submit its Annual Report to the Central Govt. They have submitted two reports so far and they contain the observations/recommendations of the Commission. These reports are made after detailed analysis of the problems confronting the Safai Karamcharis. The Govt. is also able to assess the performance of the Commission from the Reports it submits.

(c) and (d) The present Commission was constituted on 8th April 1997 for a period of three years and its present tenure will end on 7th April 2000. The Government is yet to take a decision regarding extension of the term of the Commission.

Grant of aid to Private Institutions in Chamoli

1927. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of cases have been forwarded by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the grant of central aid to the private institutions imparting training to the poor villagers in Chamoli, Uttar Pradesh during this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that while forwarding these cases by the State Government all requisite formalities had already been completed by the applicants and the State Government officials but the cases have been delayed furter due to certain objections raised by the Central Government; and

(d) whether Government would take necessary measures to finalise these cases immediately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d) No Sir. This Ministry has however received only one case of Naveen Institute of Computer Education, Chamoli, forwarded by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 6th April, 1999 for the grant. The case was considered and could not be acceded to. The organisation was informed on 17th November, 1999 accordingly.

Implementation of Recommendations of NSKC

1928. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of years for which the National Safai Karamchari commission has been in existence, so far;

(b) the important recommendations made by the Commission of Government during the last three years and the action taken by Government thereon, year-wise; and

(c) whether the Commission has been able to achieve its objective, if so, the extent thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis was constituted on 12th August, 1994 under the provision of National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993 to promote and safeguard the interests of Safai Karamcharis. The present Commission was constituted on 8th April 1997 for a period of three years. So far the Commission has been in existence for over five years. The validity of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (Amendment Act) is upto March 2002.

(b) and (c) The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis has submitted its first and second report for the year 1994-95 and 1995-96, respectively which contain the observations/recommendations. The Reports along with the Action Taken Memoranda shall be laid on the table of both the Houses of Parliament shortly.